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BEING A SERIES OF PRIVATE LETTERS, ET
ADDRESSED TO AN ANGLICAN
CLERGYMAN

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BY

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✠ John F. Kain,
Abp. St Louis.

"The nature of man is thoroughly miserable without God. Some men are not conscious of the cause of this misery; this, however, does not prevent the fact of their being miserable. For the most part, they conceal the fact as well as possible from themselves, by occupying their minds with society, sport, frivolity of all kinds; or, if intellectually disposed, with science, art, literature, business, etc. This, however, is but to fill the starving belly with husks. I know from experience the intellectual distractions of scientific research, philosophical speculation, and artistic pleasures; but am also well aware that even when all are taken together and well sweetened to taste, in respect of consequent reputation, means, social position, etc., the whole concoction is but as high confectionary to a starving man. He may cheat himself for a time—especially if he be a strong man—into the belief that he is nourishing himself by denying his natural appetite; but soon finds he was made for some altogether different kind of food, even though of much less tastefulness as far as the palate is concerned.

"Some men, indeed, never acknowledge this particularly or distinctly even to themselves, yet always show it plainly enough to others. Take, e.g., *'that last infirmity of noble minds.' I suppose the most exalted*

and least 'carnal' of worldly joys consists in the adequate recognition by the world of high achievements by ourselves. Yet it is notorious that,

'It is by God decreed
Fame shall not satisfy the highest need.'

"It has been my lot to know not a few of the famous men of our generation, and I have always observed that this is profoundly true. Like all other 'moral' satisfactions, this soon palls by custom, and as soon as one end of distinction is reached, another is pined for. There is no finality to rest in, while disease and death are always standing in the background. Custom may even blind men to their own misery, so far as not to make them realise what is wanting; yet the want is there.

"I take it, then, as unquestionably true that this whole negative side of the subject proves a vacuum in the soul of man which nothing can fill save faith in God."

From "Thoughts on Religion," by the late G. J. Romanes, M.A., F.R.S.

BACK TO ROME!

FROM MY DIARY.

15*th October* 189—.

I met B— last night, and was amazed to see him in clericals, transformed into a clergyman of the Established Church. I had no idea that the event was so near, and I had certainly entertained a lingering hope that he would either reconsider the matter and abandon his intention of seeking ordination altogether, or that the Bishops would refuse to accept him. I could not imagine what had brought about this strange and sudden termination to our many discussions and controversies. It seemed but yesterday that he came to me at Oxford, and that he asked me to help him to clear his mind on the intricacies of religious thought. He seemed to be in despair about it all; did not know himself what he really believed. He had waded through volumes of High Church theology, had read Driver and Sayce, and the foreign "higher critics," and had sounded the depths of Schleiermacher and of Harnack. And apparently all without result! And, strange thought! he had got hold of the notion that

I was the only man in Oxford to help him—I, a Roman Catholic and an outsider! I was never more astonished in my life. I said to him: In what sense can I possibly hope to be of service to you? You know my theological position as a Catholic, and you reject it. You reject it because you do not grant my premises. And, outside the Catholic position, I can see no other logical and consistent system of Christian thought—none where reason is freely exercised, and the permanent claims of human nature are considered. My mind was made up on that point years ago. So why come to me? Why not consult some of the learned authorities of the university?

But he did not seem to see the matter from this point of view. He persisted in saying that the time and thought which I had given to the study of this, the most interesting of all subjects, qualified me to be of special help to him. "The very fact," he said, "that you are a Catholic, and that your judgment is not hampered by those innumerable considerations which custom and association are so apt to call into play with most of us, makes it possible for you to help me to clear my mind. You have studied the history of Protestantism, and the Anglican system, have written several things on the subject, and your own clearly-defined position enables you to speak freely. In fact, I would much rather talk to you than to any of these fellows here in Oxford.

They seem to me to be arguing in a circle, and to be taking pains to avoid the real points at issue. They certainly never face the actual ultimate difficulty in the way you do. And consequently they don't really help me. When I talk to them I am reminded of little boys playing at hide-and-seek, trying hard not to be caught. And yet I must arrive at some sort of conclusion. I have promised my mother that I would take Holy Orders—in fact, no other profession for me has ever been under consideration. And I have really no personal objection to the life. On the contrary, I think I should like it. But what in the world am I to teach? I certainly do not belong to any school of thought at present, and I do not see how I am likely to satisfy any one of the bishops. They are bound to reject me, every one of them, as soon as they get an inkling as to my real state of mind."

B— and I had thus often found ourselves discussing the situation, and I had really become intensely interested in the man and the subject. I could see that he was desperately in earnest, and that he had a sharp and clear method of thinking, and of putting matters. And I certainly spoke very freely. I showed him the inconsistency of his position—the absurdity of attempting to teach while the mind was in a state of confusion and disorder, and could not discern any clear outline of truth: while it was scarcely certain whether there was any

definite truth to be taught. I counselled patience and waiting, and further study, and suggested one or two foreign authors who, I thought, might be found helpful.

B— seemed to see the wisdom of this advice, and promised to obey it; there was, in fact, no other way open to him. And now, a few months later, an ordained clergyman of the Church of England! How had the extraordinary thing come about? What conclusions had he so unexpectedly arrived at, and how had he arrived at them? What Bishop had ordained him? How had he managed to satisfy him? All these questions kept rushing through my mind when I beheld B— in clericals. And I fancy that he read them in my face, for he at once began explaining:—his mother's wish; the folly of wasting more time; the intricacy and many-sidedness of these religious problems; the advantages of a liberal and tentative attitude of mind; the bracing and settling influence of practical and definite work, etc., etc. He evidently had his arguments and reasons at his fingers' end, and had learnt his lesson by heart.

There was, however, a very perceptible change in him, although I found it difficult to determine in what that change precisely consisted. It was in the manner rather than in the substance of his talk. He appeared to me to be assuming a kind of ease which he was far from feeling, and I noticed that my silence, and most likely my occasional smile, too,

irritated him. He seemed to be disappointed that I did not applaud the good sense of his action, and that I did not wish him luck in his undertaking. And yet I felt instinctively all the while that he was really anxious to ascertain what my inmost thoughts were.

From what I gathered in the course of our conversation, the Bishop of R— had experienced no difficulty whatever in ordaining him. His Oxford career had been pronounced an eminently satisfactory one, his moral conduct beyond reproach. The Examining Chaplains had found his theological attainments to be of a superior order. No awkward question had been asked him in the matter of doctrine. A clergyman in a western part of London had given him a title to his curacy, another already ordained candidate having failed him on account of illness; and thus B— had received Holy Orders. But now the earlier applicant, a man of considerable experience, had been restored to health, and the Bishop of R— had assented to B—'s seeking some other curacy. This early and unexpected disappointment had given B— time for thought and reflection; he had in some measure recovered his former tone of mind, and, as it seemed to me, all his old religious difficulties had reasserted themselves. He seemed loth to let me go, and when he found all his efforts to make me speak out in vain, and my attitude to be a persistently reserved and

reticent one, he blurted out all at once: "I wish to goodness you would tell me what you think. I have not a soul to whom I can talk about these matters, and I am horribly unsettled. Tell me plainly what you think of my present position, and what you conceive my duty to be. I believe that you are a man of well-balanced mind, and I really value your judgment."

My position was, of course, a very difficult one, and I began to feel its responsibility. As a Catholic, my answer would have been a short and simple one. But with that he was acquainted already, and it was clear that it was as a personal friend and as a man of the world rather that he wished me to view the present situation.

I briefly reviewed the chief points of our recent conversation, and then I said something to this effect: From what you have just told me, and from what I am able to read between the lines, I am inclined to think that you are no Christian at all in the historic sense of that term. You admire the person of Christ and His ethical system as any moralist might admire it, but you are not quite sure that He had any other mission, that His life and death had any other purpose. In your heart of hearts you are, forgive me for saying it, a rationalist and an unbeliever. I will, however, dismiss this thought, as a mere passing impression. I will assume that

you hold the fundamental ideas which the conventional Anglican clergyman is supposed to hold, and I will think the matter out. It is a ticklish and complicated question, which requires consideration; but I will write to you in a day or two. My words seemed to have a kind of paralysing effect upon poor B—'s mind. He stared at me for some seconds, then took out his pocket-book, scribbled his address on his card, and squeezing my hand, left me standing in the street without uttering another word.

And thus I find myself a few hours later at my writing-table, deeply pondering the course of events, and thought chasing thought in endless succession. What an extraordinary thing this Anglican ecclesiastical institution is! What a more extraordinary thing still the Anglican ecclesiastical mind! I am often wondering whether they have ever asked themselves how the whole thing looks from the outsider's point of view.

The normal English mind clearly is a sincerely religious one. It is determined to keep a hold on "higher things," and in some sense or other to continue believing in Christ. The waves of the materialistic and rationalistic movements of thought which have undermined, if not altogether destroyed, Foreign Protestantism, have broken on the firm rock of English Christianity, and have practically left it intact. But what an astonishing super-

structure they have erected on that rock! How frail and brittle its material! how grotesque and disproportionate its several parts! It always seems to me that the really thoughtful Englishman, had he never heard of the system of the Established Church, and were it suddenly presented to him, would smile at the absurdity of its character and constitution. He could not by any possible chance call it an historical and Catholic institution. His native common sense alone would cause him to look upon it with disdainful indifference, as scarcely deserving the consideration and attention of a serious mind. But the thing exists. It has somehow come into being, and has managed to permeate every phase of his national and personal life, and so he defends it. He defends it because it is there, and because it is an English institution. All time-worn English institutions must be good, or must at least be made to appear to be good. The merest schoolboy knowledge of history ought to suffice to show conclusively that the English Church is a thorough Protestant institution, that its founders gloried in the rupture with Catholic Christendom and in the setting up of a different and wholly uncatholic system of ideas. No single foreign theologian of repute, or man of common sense, has ever held any other view, or would trouble to discuss the matter. Until the last fifty years, no sensible Englishman entertained a doubt on the subject. And here we

find Bishops and theologians and learned laymen straining every nerve to accomplish the impossible; working hard to falsify history, and to demonstrate that this same Protestant institution is really Catholic, and that that Catholicity is of an exceptionally pure and elevated and "liberal" type. I often wonder whether they really and honestly believe that this astonishing notion will ultimately find acceptance, and that it will become the permanent belief of intelligent Englishmen. My own impression is, that the foolish and baseless dream is bound to be dissipated before very long, and that there will be a sad awakening. What the Church of England has really to fear is, not the divergence of the various schools of doctrinal thought, its disestablishment as a temporal institution, but history, and the common sense of mankind and of sensible Englishmen. I am convinced that it is on that solid rock, standing firm and immovable far out in the troubled ocean of human thought, that the frail ship of Anglo-Catholicism will ultimately suffer shipwreck; and, if I am not very much mistaken, that rock is already in sight. It is impossible to doubt this, if we thoughtfully study the more recent movements in the world of religious ideas, and if we listen to the voices which are here and there beginning to make themselves heard.

16th October 189—.

I have just written to B—, as follows:—

I was so glad we met yesterday; although I must confess that I was not prepared for the heavy responsibility which you have laid upon me. The subject is an extremely delicate and difficult one to write about, and I scarcely know where to begin. And how am I to escape the charge of proselytism? It will be almost impossible for you to suppress the thought that I am unduly dwelling upon the disadvantages of the Anglican system, in order to bring out in greater distinctness the immense and innumerable advantages of the Catholic Church. Indeed, the inference is almost inevitable. And yet, since you persist in saying that I am the only man likely to be of service to you, I will run the risk. I will tell you honestly what I think, and, in telling it, I will try, as far as may be possible, to put away the thought that I am a Catholic, and that I believe my Church to be the only true one. I will endeavour to judge the whole matter from the standpoint of the man of the world—of ordinary intelligence, morality, and common sense.

I must confess that, in reviewing the situation, I cannot in the least imagine in what sphere of the Anglican system you are likely to find a post in which you could work with any real satisfaction to yourself and to others—in which you could put your knowledge and attainments to any practical use. So far as my personal knowledge of you enables me to understand your position, you are certainly not a High Churchman. You are attracted by the superior tone and learning of the High Church Party, but you reject, as untrue and unapostolic, some of those fundamental principles upon which they base their system. You practically reject the entire sacramental interpretation of Christianity. And I think you told me more than once at Oxford that you believed with Newman, that the modern Anglican claim to historic continuity would turn out to be a delusion and a snare.

You are not a Low Churchman, because you have often emphatically assured me that they are, as a party, extremely distasteful to you; that you consider them to be a poorly-educated, emotional set of people — moreover, a steadily diminishing quantity, whose doctrines are impossible philosophically, and untrue and untenable historically. You declared that you could not possibly work with them.

And I do not think that any one who really knows your ideas would say that you are, in any

sense, a Broad Churchman. In a letter to me, to which I have just referred, you admit, with Newman, that "liberalism in Religion is, in its practical effects, the death of Religion," and that a Revelation which, upon examination, is found to reveal nothing very definite, and which ultimately throws the whole thing back upon the inclinations and imaginings of each individual mind, is no Revelation at all.

On the other hand, you say that Christianity must be admitted to be more than a mere ethical system of thought. This latter conclusion you hold to be inevitable, on the sure grounds of history and of biblical tradition. But you hesitate to say in what this *more* really consists. You do not care to commit yourself. You want to be a sort of eclectic—a person who picks out a fragment of truth here and there, holding it in an isolated, disjointed sort of way, but who cannot piece the different fragments together, and construct them into a mutually harmonious and consistent whole. And, having no consistent whole, and consequently no intelligible Christianity, you have nothing definite to teach. And you seem to me to look upon this intellectual and doctrinal helplessness as a sort of superior mental position; to regard yourself as a person who is standing on the mountain top, surveying the scene in its general outline and perspective, and looking with pity upon the toiling, struggling masses below, who only see a

portion of the scene, and who are therefore bound to be for evermore in disagreement.

But are you justified in thus regarding your intellectual position? Is it not rather one of religious bankruptcy? Is it not a form of strategy by which the modern mind hopes to escape the unwelcome conclusion that it has made shipwreck of the Faith? You may be able to defend such an attitude of mind to yourself, and to your friends who may perhaps be passing through a similar process of thought, but who are not in the habit of thinking very deeply about the matter. But shall you be able to defend it before your own conscience and before God—before those whom you are commissioned to instruct respecting that *something* which you say you believe to have been revealed? What will you teach them? On what principle will you construct your work and career as a clergyman? You may be disinclined to label yourself as belonging to this party or to that in the Church of England. But that device too is daily becoming more and more impossible. Your people will label you, and they will do so the moment you open your mouth or celebrate the Holy Communion. In the Church of England, as you know full well, every single article of faith has been, and is, the subject of controversy, and admits of a difference of opinion, and your slightest word, your most innocent liturgical action, may reveal what your own personal

belief or opinion really is. You will, in the course of time, find the Free-Lance-Policy an utter impossibility. You will be dissatisfied with yourself, and, in the course of time, you will lose that delicate sense of truth and of your duty towards it, which can alone render your clerical work really satisfying and fruitful. You will become a mere clerical automaton, moving amidst shibboleths and echoing conventional religious phrases, but, in your heart of hearts, despising yourself. No! The thing is, I know, possible for many sorts of mind and of temperament. It is quite impossible for yours—impossible from every point of view. Ordinary honesty alone condemns it, forbids your undertaking any kind of religious duties, while your mind continues in its present state. My advice to you therefore is: Look out for a mastership at some college or educational institution. Teach classics or mathematics, and perhaps read prayers on Sundays, and employ all your spare time in thinking and reading and—praying. Be sure that if a Divine Revelation be really given, it must be possible for a man of firm purpose and of devout and prayerful mind to ascertain in what that revelation consists. Above all things, keep clear of the modern "liberal" cleric, of the man of "comprehensive" creed. You have nothing to hope from him. His Christianity is the child of a modern and more or less unchristian age: it is not the Christianity of

Christ. Comprehensiveness is but the modern term for the shipwreck of Faith.

I am, as you see, speaking very plainly; I hope, however, not unkindly or unsympathetically. In any case, remember that it is at your own earnest and repeated request that I am writing to you, and that I am venturing to offer advice on a subject which is both the most important and the most difficult and complicated that can occupy the human mind.

23*rd October* 189—.

No letter from B—. I was beginning to feel quite uneasy about him this morning, fearing that my bluntness and direct way of writing might, after all, have offended him. There are some persons who will ask you to be quite honest with them, and who will tell you that it is above all things truth that they desire, but who are nevertheless hurt when truth is presented to them, and when they are made to see their faces in its spotless mirror. In spite of all their assurances, they somehow seem to expect that you must make a compromise, that you must let them down gently. But how can there be truth or fact so long as there is compromise, how can truth be expected to do its perfect work?

I am inclined to think, however, that B— is not a weakling of that sort. We have in times past given each other some hard knocks, but they have never affected our friendship, and if they sometimes left something resembling a cloud between us, that cloud always passed when we met in the schools or at the river. He is an honest, straightforward, and truth-loving fellow, and I am convinced that if he

had not been reared in the sultry atmosphere of Anglican thought, but had been born a Catholic, he would have become one of the shining lights of the Church. Well! who knows what the future may have in store for him? I shall follow his career with interest and sympathy, and shall certainly continue to pray for him.

After fully considering the matter this morning, I thought it best not to write to him again for the present, but to leave him to his cogitations. I determined upon the more diplomatic course of calling upon the M—s, who know B— well, and who know something, too, of his difficulties and mental perplexities. They are very charming and interesting people — thoroughly in sympathy with the Anglo-Catholic movement. They practically believe every Catholic doctrine, and would be Catholics to-morrow could they shake themselves free from that hallucination which the strange religious teaching which they have received has created. How they love and linger over that vision of a National Church, thoroughly English in character, and yielding no kind of obedience to a foreign bishop, which is the central picture in the confused Anglican dream! Could they but see what an extraordinary delusion this really is, and how fundamental the error which underlies it! As though it was not an elementary law of the Gospel that, strictly speaking, nationality has and can have

no place in the true Catholic system, since in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, that a higher spiritual element overrules these human distinctions and considerations, and binds all men, irrespective of race, together in one great family. And has it never occurred to them that even if every Pope were an Englishman or a Frenchman, he would still be a foreigner from the standpoint of some other nation—that, indeed, there could not be a visible head of the Church who would not be a foreigner from somebody's standpoint.

There is really a good deal of truth in what a man said to me the other day: "We English are so eaten up with pride and exclusiveness, and with the craze of imperialism, that we are quite hurt at the thought that we cannot have a God all to ourselves, a distinctly English God, who just tolerates the people who are not of the English race."

But somehow the M—s like Catholics—R.C.'s, as they call them. They maintain that they have much more sympathy with them than with Protestant Anglicans, who, in their eyes, are nothing more than Dissenters, however firmly they may be attached to the National Church. It is a pity that we cannot return the compliment, that in spite of all their "Matins," and "Masses," and "Confessions," and "Genuflections," history and common sense, and our very fundamental conception of the Church, compel us to regard them as outside the true Catholic fold.

But the M—s are really nice people, and I like to listen to their talk—to trace in all they think and do the workings of Divine grace, and to see them do true pioneer work for the historic Church of the Redeemer.

They had not seen anything of B—, and could give me no information. But, on my return home, I found a letter from him awaiting me. And as this may turn out a largish correspondence, I will copy it out here for future reference.

"I have read and re-read your letter, and I have to admit that you have summarised the situation very accurately, and that you have helped me very considerably to analyse my own state of mind as it really is. This is no doubt a great point gained. We are so apt, by a variety of personal considerations and side issues, to allow our judgment to become distorted and muddled.

"But are you not painting the pictures in too glaring colours? I acknowledge at once that you are right in your main conclusion. I certainly cannot at present describe myself as belonging to any known party in the Church of England, and I am not, so far, committed to any particular shibboleth, as you would term it. But is this so great a disadvantage and so illogical a position as you appear to think? Is it not the position which numbers of very earnest and learned men are increasingly occupying, and which a young

clergyman is practically recommended to occupy? Gore and many others admit that we are in a state of transition—suffering on account of the sins of our fathers, and that the doctrinal expressions formulated by them aimed at shelving difficulties rather than at explaining them. The fresh appeal to Scripture and to history, moreover, has caused very many modifications in our way of looking at things. I can see no difficulty, and certainly no dishonesty, in a young clergyman occupying, for a time at least, a merely waiting and tentative position — teaching essentials while keeping his mind open on non-essentials. At any rate, it is the position occupied by the very best men in our Church.

"I had jotted down some stray ideas on the three distinctive schools of thought to which you direct my attention, and what I conceive to be the truths emphasised by each. But, upon re-reading your letter, I came to the conclusion that you would regard them as mere side issues, and I must confess that I felt myself that the main question is a deeper and a far more serious one, and that in its solution all these minor considerations are practically contained.

"You said to me, when we met the other day, that you did not think that I was a Christian at all in the accepted historic sense of that term; and I must confess that the more I ponder this thought, the more I begin to feel that it is here that I am face to face with the chief difficulty. The thought has, I

assure you, given me several restless nights, and again and again I have tried to evade it, but there is no getting away from it; and what I marvel at is that so many of our leaders manage to evade it so successfully. The chief question clearly is: What really is Christianity? Is it a system of ethical principles and religious ideas appealing to, and confirming, those instinctive higher feelings and promptings which lie latent in the human heart, and is it as such capable of a variety of expressions and adaptations, in a sense underlying all purer religions and all dogmatic definitions?—in other words, Is Christ the Son of God in the sense that He is the highest and most perfect of creatures, to whom the afterthought of theology has attributed certain superhuman powers and characteristics?

"Or is He, in a true and definite sense, God incarnate, a manifestation to us of the invisible Deity: is Christianity an authoritative disclosure of the mind and purpose of God, before which all human voices must become silent, and before which heart and intellect alike must bow in trembling faith and adoration?

"I frankly admit that it has always seemed to me that if the latter be the case, your own position at once becomes the only possible and reasonable, and, I ought to add, logical one; because it would then follow that such an authoritative disclosure would have to be a continuous one, to be preserved and

transmitted from age to age, and binding upon every succeeding generation of mankind. But I must confess that if I honestly examine myself, I am unable to answer this question definitely at this present time. A very host of conflicting thoughts rises up in my mind the moment I even contemplate it, and I can understand that even learned and serious-minded men do not care to face the issue.

"From my own experience (and it is not a very extensive one, I admit) of men and things in the Church of England, I am inclined to think that, while all the schools of thought appear to hold the latter view, they have a sneaking sort of feeling that the former may, after all, be the truer view, and this hesitating attitude explains much that we cannot understand in the present state of religious thought in England. I am constantly meeting with men who speak of Christ as divine, and yet when one comes to discuss with them the meaning of that term, and to apply it dogmatically, they seem to fall back upon a kind of rationalistic reserve, and to be afraid of committing themselves. And I own to a similar kind of feeling, which is no doubt brought about by my dabbling in the Higher Criticism, and by the normal influences of one's daily environments.

"Of course I shall have to face the question sooner or later, and I mean to face it. I feel with you that everything depends upon it. But it is a very big subject, too big almost for a correspondence of this

sort, and I am looking forward to a good long talk with you very soon. When and where can I meet you? Better give me the choice of two days. I am comparatively free week after next, and could come to your rooms and spend the evening. Or do you care to come down here?"

In reply to this letter, I wrote to B— as follows:—

I need not tell you that I have read your letter with very sincere interest and sympathy—interest, because I have always considered the religious development of a really cultivated and thoughtful mind to be the most fascinating of all studies; and sympathy, because I can in some measure understand to what mental pain and disquietude you are putting yourself in thus resolutely facing this the greatest and most burning of all problems, and in digging right down to the very foundation of things. Your very resolve to do this is a very definite step forward in the right direction; it is one that the larger proportion of Anglican clergymen are far too indifferent and superficial to take. They live in an atmosphere of conventionality and of religious phrases, from which only one here and there has the courage to set himself free. My own firm conviction is, that five out of six could not write down in an intelligent and connected way what they really believe in their heart of hearts respecting the person of Christ. Five hundred years of controversy has deprived them of

the power of clearly and positively affirming any great truth, and of holding it in its simplicity and purity. In all they write and think, one becomes conscious of the "skeleton in the cupboard," of that other aspect of the matter which is incessantly haunting them, and against which they feel they have to be on their guard in their very phraseology and mode of expression. Their attitude is always negative, never positive; and consequently it is lacking in force and incisiveness, and in the end fails to carry conviction.

I am delighted with the latter portion of your letter. It shows me that you have fully grasped the real point at issue, and that you are determined not to evade it. I am convinced that, with this determination, the victory is already gained. Of course it cannot be a matter of indifference to the God of truth whether we believe truth or error. "Religion," as Pascal says, "is so stupendous a reality, that those who will not take the trouble to study its obscurities are justly deprived of its benefits." You will now go to the foundation of things, by the side of which "schools of thought," and "criticisms," and "modern claims" are mere trivialities, and before which they sink into utter insignificance. Bear in mind that the truth—with the recognition and acceptance of which the salvation of the soul must be said to be bound up—cannot possibly depend upon the verdict of the latest biblical

science, or upon any means and source of information which are not as accessible to the poorest and most illiterate of men as they are to the most favoured and enlightened. The men or the institutions which maintain such a principle or build up their systems upon it, encompass thereby their own destruction, and are digging their own graves. Reason and intelligence demand that there should be a higher and altogether different court of appeal: else how could doubt and misgiving ever be banished from the human soul, and how could that certainty be attained without which a truly Christian life is unthinkable. That you may ultimately find that source of certainty, and that you may find it on your own lines, independent of anything I may personally believe and say to you, will hereafter be my earnest and constant prayer.

The question, then, to the solution of which you are about to address yourself, and which, believe me, sums up all other questions, is: Who and what is Christ? It is a question of the deepest import, and one well worthy the thoughtful and painstaking research of the noblest and keenest of intellects. It was Mr Gladstone, I think, who once said that it is upon the right answer to this question that the world's happiness and progress depend; with which there is bound up the only hope of our wayward race.

For us Catholics the answer has long been given—indeed, we start with what we thoroughly believe to

be the true answer, and we seek to construct our spiritual life upon it. We do not believe that God came down upon earth, bringing with Him only certain hypotheses. We say emphatically with the Apostles and first disciples of the Lord: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And we say it unequivocally, and without any kind of mental reserve. We find enduring peace and happiness in that belief, firmly held before the New Testament existed, and before its "higher" critics were thought of.

To the Protestant, that unhesitating confession of Faith, of course, is impossible. He has no external authority upon which he can construct it, and his own judgment in the matter is necessarily hampered by a thousand circumstances and conditions, by the very air he breathes, and the very environments of his daily life. If he holds it at all, he holds it upon imperfect and inadequate grounds, and there is no reason why he should not at any moment be called upon to part with it. This spiritual instability and sense of uncertainty is his inheritance—it is the "sin of his fathers visited upon the children." What should have been his early birthright, has to be gained and searched after by him with endless toil and labour, and with much mental and moral suffering. It is an instance of the invariable method of God's dealing with mankind.

I am saying all this because it is necessary that

you should face the seriousness and reality of the conflict which lies before you. A thousand influences will be at work to divert you from your task. All the powers of this world, in the shape of the question of your success and career, the temptation to be "sensible," and "reasonable," and "liberal," and to progress with the age and its so-called learning, will assault you with a thousand ingenious devices, and will seek to obstruct the progress of your soul; and you will again and again be tempted to turn back, and to join the superficial easy-going multitude. You will need all the armour of God to stand in the evil day. It will be well for you then to remember that, while the penalty of sin has to be paid, God is watching behind the cloud which obscures your vision; that the cloud is bound to clear away when the psychological moment comes, *i.e.*, when your own prayers and labour have prepared the way for the reception of the highest truth. It is then that God will speak. Knowing full well the immense difficulties which are awaiting a mind and character like yours, I am strongly tempted, as your oldest friend, to make some further suggestions; but perhaps I had better refrain from doing so. I might unconsciously influence your mind, and bias it in the Catholic direction, and you might hereafter regret that you allowed any such influence to affect your judgment in even the faintest measure.

I hope to see you in a day or two. But I thought

it better to write to you while the impressions created by your letter were fresh in my mind; and, in a way, it is more satisfactory to put down on paper what one thinks on so important and burning a subject. Personal conversation is so apt to dilute and tone down the force and weight of the ideas to which one attaches most importance, and which one is most anxious to implant in another mind.

28*th October* 189—.

My dear B—. Thank you for your most interesting letter. I am delighted with your earnestness and determination, and I feel confident that, even though the present may be a time of much agitation and mental disquiet for you, you will not regret having passed through it in the years to come. The problem which you are seeking to solve is the greatest and most important of all the problems facing the human intellect, and, for the really thoughtful mind, there can be no true peace and contentment while for some reason or other it is being evaded or pushed aside. My own deep personal conviction is, that that pessimism and weariness of life from which the modern age is suffering so severely is not so much due to any one of those minor causes to which the wise ones of the world are so apt to refer it, as to the absence of that strong and all-conquering faith in the existence of God and in His constant guidance of the individual life which Christianity emphasises and confirms so strongly, and without which human nature at best remains imperfect and incomplete. The modern world has

not half realised the immense truth underlying that mighty saying of St Augustine's: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Religious indifference is in our days falsely supposed to be a mark of higher culture, while it is in reality the real heresy of the age: it is by far the most dangerous disease from which modern society is suffering. Our nature is so constituted, that we cannot maintain a negative religious attitude and yet cultivate our spiritual faculties. The soul must have some definite truth upon which to construct its life. Suspense of mind respecting that truth is practically unbelief. There must of necessity be a time when we are examining and questioning; but that time, unduly prolonged, creates a fixed state of the mind, which is unbelief. It debilitates the mind and brings about a kind of spiritual paralysis. Morality itself, as the late Duke of Argyll rightly wrote, cannot be maintained except in connection with definite belief. Men cannot live on a diet of negation.

And bear in mind that "the Christian cause," as Tertullian said, "only fears to be condemned without due study. Truth does not ask for indulgence; it only asks for justice." "The credentials of Christianity are sufficient for men of good will. To such alone is its peace offered. Aristotle truly teaches that, in the moral order, truth is apprehended not only by the intelligence but by the whole soul: *σὴν ὅλῃ ψυχῇ.*

As a matter of fact, there is only one way in which Christianity ever has made, or ever will make, proselytes in the world. Its victories have been won, not by mere argument—arguments have been called the symbols of something deeper—not by mere eloquence, not by the wisdom of this world, but by an appeal to those fundamental spiritual instincts of men, whereunto it supremely corresponds." *

Why am I writing all this? Because I am convinced that, in the present conflict between the creeds, and between belief and misbelief, or disbelief, it is not, as so many seem to suppose, a question of theology, but *a question of philosophy, and of accurate thinking.* Many end badly and wrongly because they start badly and wrongly, and with entire misconception as to what Christianity is, and how its truth may be most securely established. We must be clear, for instance, what we can hope to know and understand, and what, by reason of the limitations of our nature, we can never hope to know and grasp fully—upon what grounds we are justified in accepting and believing in a Divine disclosure. It is on these points that the teaching of our Catholic philosophy is so valuable and helpful, and that it enables us to take large and broad views: to lay a good and sound and stable foundation. It is ignorance of it on the part of our

* W. S. Lilly.

opponents which leads to so much confusion, and which estranges so many earnest minds from the Christian religion.

You ask me to help you, and to try and steer you past those great spiritual and intellectual rocks on which the faith of so many noble minds is foundering to-day. It is, I say again, a difficult and delicate position in which you are placing me; but I may not shrink from the task, and I promise you that I will do my best. Tell me of your difficulties as you go along, and I will tell you how they look from my point of view, irrespective of the definite dogmatism of my Church, and so far as that may be possible, from the philosophic and common-sense standpoint rather than from the distinctly theological one. I shall not and cannot attempt to be learned. I maintain, and have always maintained, that however great the learning with which Catholic theologians have enriched and fortified the Church, the great truth upon which the entire system reposes is an extremely simple one, and does not need the aid of the theologian. It was believed and taught by simple and uneducated men before scholastic theology came into being; and even though the controversies of centuries have complicated things and have made our task an infinitely more difficult one, I am convinced that, to-day too, reason, and common sense, and accurate thinking will go a long way towards removing those dark shadows which obstruct the world's spiritual

sight. Unfortunately, between the spiritual world and the life of the flesh there has arisen a great world of the understanding, with principles and interests of its own, the habitual inhabiting of which appears to be quite as bad a preparation for the spiritual life as it is for the life of the flesh. Those who live chiefly in this world—and how many of us do—come to the true spiritual world with a sense of bewilderment which makes it very difficult to attach to the judgments we form upon it the same sense of certainty which is felt concerning the intellectual issues of that more limited world to which so large a part of our intellectual life is devoted.

For the earnest seeker, therefore, it is of primary importance that he should thoroughly understand and define the sphere within which the intellect may be said to operate in the matter of religion—to what extent its conclusions may be trusted, when its limitations are reached. And it is of still greater importance that he should throw open his whole soul to the influences of that unseen spiritual world which is in constant operation around and upon him, and from which the truest knowledge and the highest certainty can alone come. This, as you know, can only be effected by prayer, by a judicious training of the moral faculty and of the conscience, and by an abstaining from those noisy gaieties of the world which are so apt to paralyse the higher sensibilities of our spiritual nature, and to dissipate the powers of our souls.

It was a modern scientific man* who said, not very long ago, that—

"The supernatural, in its true meaning, *i.e.*, the knowledge of God, cannot be a matter of external evidence or of any experience here or hereafter, founded on the evidence of the senses. Such knowledge is incommunicable from without; it is the voice of the Spirit to the spirit, and 'the soul must be very still to hear God speak.'"

In conclusion, I would say with your Anglican Hooker:—

"If truth do anywhere manifest itself, seek not to smother it with glossing delusions; acknowledge the greatness thereof, and think it your best victory when the same doth prevail over you."

After all, there are only two judgments to care for—God's and your own soul's. Be true to Him and to your own self, and let the world say what it will. Its voice in laughter or in anger is but the crackling of thorns under a pot. It may hurt your life, that you must bear; it cannot touch your soul, that is God's. And though all men judge you unrighteously, you shall yet win, if you be true, from the Lord, the righteous Judge, the crown of righteousness.

P.S.—I am adding two notes. They are from the works of two distinguished laymen, neither of them

* Prof. W. F. Barrett.

Catholics, and one not even a Christian in the true historic sense of that term. To my mind they illustrate very forcibly what I have asserted in my letter, and what I have often maintained in the course of our discussions and arguments, viz., that even though they cannot produce in us Divine faith, reason and good sense and accurate thinking will go a long way towards enabling us to lay hold of those "fundamentals" upon which the Christian system is built up. It is, as you know, my own very firm conviction that the modern "ethical" view of Christianity which is at present attracting so many minds, and which is supposed to be the solution of so many problems, is, as a matter of fact, infinitely more irrational, and presents far greater intellectual difficulties, than the traditional supernatural view, which is the backbone of the Catholic system.

I.

"Christianity with a non-miraculous Christ is merely a form of opinion, of feeling, or of prejudice which is no doubt honest even to the degree of fanaticism, but which is due entirely to peculiar and transitory circumstances; which has no abiding foundation in science, logic, or history; and which, though retaining at present the semblance of many Christian features, retains them only like shapes taken by a cloud, and doomed to be lost or metamorphosed in the inevitable restlessness of the air.

"If miracles do not happen, and if Christ had not been with God from the beginning, what authority had He for describing to us the Father's character? and why should we order our souls in accordance with what He told us?"—Mallock: *Amateur Christianity.*

II.

"Now this (Christianity as a moral system only) I hold to be as pernicious as it is absurd. If Christ was only a great human teacher, what did He know more about God or morality than any other man who might have arrived at his knowledge by ordinary processes? What could He know more than you or I? He may have inferred, or have guessed, but what knowledge had He?

"Again, He distinctly stated that He came from God, that He was free from sin, that He had the power to forgive sin, that no man took His life from Him, that He would rise again. He promised that whatever was asked His Father in His name He would give.

"Now, whatever may be the interpretations put upon some of these sayings, there is, I take it, no manner of doubt that He assumed supernatural knowledge and supernatural power. He taught the highest morality of life and heart, and at the same time made these assumptions. If these assumptions were false—if He was a great impostor—what can be the value of His moral teaching; what the value

of anything He said about the Father and the many mansions, and the place He was going to prepare for us? Either He was true, or He was a lunatic, or He was an impostor. The last alternative seems to me impossible, for His words have appealed to the deepest recesses of the conscience of man, from the time they were uttered until now. There was no trace of lunacy in his conduct; and although some said He had a devil, and was mad, the suggestion was at once turned aside. Then He was true; and if so, He came from God, and was not mere man, and He went to God, and ever lives to make intercession for us.

"I know not all the meaning of those mighty words, but I feel that there is a truth in them that passes human knowledge now, but some glimpses of the meaning of which we gather through the heart, and the whole of which we may know hereafter when we know as we are known.

". . . It is not in the moral teaching of our Lord that the great power of Christianity lies, but in the belief that He did for man that which man could not do for himself—the belief that He died for you and me, and in some mysterious manner made God and man at one. I have no power to theorise on this great fact, but I am sure that history teaches that it is faith in Christ, a personal Christ, Who died for us men and for our salvation, that has given the power to Christianity, and has

moulded the life of the world. Would men have gone to the stake, or to the lions, or the dungeon, for a moral teaching? Would they have sung psalms in dying agonies for a moral teaching? Would crusades have been made for a mere idea? No, it has been for the belief in what He did and is now doing at the right hand of God that men have been willing, nay, eager, to die."

Sir Russell Reynolds, Bart., M.D.:
Essays and Addresses.

3rd November 189—.

I felt certain, from what you told me the other night, that you would before long find yourself face to face with that fundamental question which lies at the root of the controversy between the Catholic Church and the Protestant communions—the question of *the Bible and the Church.* Your letter received this morning confirms the correctness of that impression, except that you have reached that point a good deal sooner than I had expected. I most sincerely trust that you will not treat this matter lightly or superficially, or that you will seek to escape the grave difficulties which it presents by falling back upon one of the many conventional phrases which are in popular use.

I need hardly point out to you that there is the greatest possible divergence between the teaching of the Catholic Church and the Protestant communions on this subject, however closely a certain modern section of the Establishment may approach the former. It must be clear to any honest mind which has not lost the power of thinking accurately, that the foundation upon which the entire Protestant system of

thought reposes is the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. The sixth Article of the Anglican Church expresses this very clearly, and the entire history of the Reformation is one continuous witness to it. The modern Anglican attempt to set up some kind of Church authority which is to supersede and, in a sense, to guarantee the Scriptures, cannot be regarded with seriousness by any really thoughtful mind. It is a position into which the recent attacks on the Scriptures and the results of the Higher Criticism are practically forcing earnest Anglican Churchmen; but it is one which they must themselves feel to be utterly and wholly untenable. Incessant controversy, the necessity of bolstering up an impossible and entirely unhistoric theory of the Church, the habitual distortion of plain facts never hitherto denied, has, of course, greatly confused the issues, and has impaired the power of accurate judgment in the case of many; but recent events in the Anglican Church, and the steadily increasing respect of intelligent men for the Catholic position, indicates very clearly which way the wind is blowing, and what the *ultimate* view of the matter is likely to be. My own feeling is that here too it is scarcely necessary to call in the aid of the theologian in order to defend the position and claim of the old Church. It is a simple question of history, and it is to the facts of history that the ultimate appeal must ever be. We are there on safe and solid ground, and it is there that the real

and final end of the great controversy will be reached.

"To suppose Christianity based upon the collection of ancient documents called the Bible, is historically false. It is certain that no authorised New Testament Canon existed until the latter half of the second century. It is equally certain that the mission of the Author of Christianity was not to promote the formation of a volume which, long centuries after, should become the religion of Protestants, but to establish a Society. 'I should not receive the Sacred Scripture,' St Augustine declared, 'unless the authority of the Catholic Church moved me to do so.' The Bible is, in fact, the creation of the Catholic Church, from which other varieties of Christianity have received it. And the Catholic Church, while declaring it in all matters of faith and morals divinely inspired throughout, has never pronounced how far that inspiration extends — has never formally committed herself to 'the traditional thesis' which has come down from uncritical ages." *

To my own mind it is a source of never-ceasing astonishment how this indubitable fact, so clearly witnessed to by all history, can still be assailed by men who have the welfare of Christianity at heart; how they can dispute it, and call it in question. One might surely have supposed that in an age like ours, in which the entire authority of Holy Scripture

* W. S. Lilly: *Great Enigma.*

is undermined by those who are its appointed and commissioned guardians, and in which it is increasingly felt that, in Anglican matters, all the foundations are out of course, wise men would be only too thankful to be able to fall back upon that ancient and impregnable position which can alone secure to us and preserve for us the true historic teaching of the Redeemer. Unhappily for them, that ancient and only impregnable position turns out to be the Catholic one, and self-preservation alone demands that that position should be shown to be an historically false and an intellectually impossible one. But for us, how wonderfully is the action of Divine Providence revealed in the institution of the Church as a safeguard and preserver of Divine Revelation, how marvellously are modern events exhibiting the fundamental errors of the Reformation! With the doctrine of the supreme authority of the Sacred Scriptures as a guide, where and what will Christianity be in another couple of hundred years? What is likely to be left of these same Scriptures, considering all that has already been thrown overboard? In the *Encyclopædia Biblica* of the twenty-first century, who will be able to trace even the outline of the original story of the Cross and of the process of Redemption?

I very much fear that in writing all this I am departing from those rules to which I had determined to adhere in my correspondence with you.

But you must admit that my position is an extremely difficult one, seeing that for me historical Christianity and the Catholic Church are absolutely identical, and that I cannot speak of one without constantly speaking of and introducing the other.

Indeed my difficulty seems to increase as I go on, and I am more than ever convinced that, even in these fundamental questions, an honest mind which will resolutely face and examine the real issues, and which will do so quite irrespective of those peculiar influences and predilections which the social and intellectual environments of our modern life are so apt to create, will find the Catholic position the only possible and rational one. The difficulties attending the very notion of a Revealed Religion are great enough, Heaven knows! How insuperable are they when they are regarded from the standpoint of a subjective Protestantism, devoid of all external authority, and by its divisions and subdivisions incessantly introducing additional and unexpected difficulties. I can quite understand how a thoughtful person can become a Rationalist, or at any rate cease to be a Christian; I cannot understand how he can be a Protestant. I would say most emphatically with Newman: "Either the Catholic religion is verily the coming of the unseen world into this, or there is nothing positive, nothing dogmatic, nothing real in any of our notions as to whence we come and whither we go."

But now, having been led to say this much, I am naturally anxious to say a little more in defence of the historic Catholic position, and in answer to the many objections which will at once be occurring to your mind.

1. Let me, in the first place, quote a few words from the Memorials of the late Mr Bellasis, which, to my mind, admirably sum up the advantages of the Catholic over the Protestant system of thought:—

"Where faith is one, and those who profess it are united, they only carry with them the assent of the good: but their moral force rouses and carries forward the indifferent and careless as pebbles are moved by a rapid torrent. When faith is divided, or when those who profess it contend as antagonists, their moral momentum is destroyed, and the indifferent fall away like sand in a stream slackened."

"A Catholic takes his religion from the Society appointed by our Lord to teach it, and occupies himself, if he is a good Catholic, in acting up to it, so as to save his soul. A Protestant, if he acts upon his principles, must occupy himself in finding out his religion, a task he never completes, but spends his time, which should be dedicated to obeying and acting out a known law, in endless endeavour to find out the law for himself."

2. The Church, it is clear, must provide the Body in which the Spirit of Religion is to be lodged. We

may as well expect that the spirits of men should be seen by us without the intervention of their bodies, as suppose that the object of faith can be realised in a world of sense and excitement without the instrumentality of an outward form to arrest and fix attention, to stimulate the careless, and to encourage the desponding. Religion must be realised in particular acts in order to secure the continuance of its life. There is no such thing as abstract religion. When people attempt to worship in this, what they call, more spiritual manner, they end in fact in not worshipping at all.

The chief aim of Catholicism is to promote the "inward spiritual life"; but the form of worship which makes religion a purely interior function will only do for "flesh-free spirits," or "persons who are all intellect."

"The great majority of mankind, being composites of soul and body, have to learn of things divine through the medium of sense, and naturally translate their religious feelings into outward act. This would be the case even if the original balance between spirit and organism had never been disturbed. In the actual state of things, which makes the control of passion an essential function of religion, external forms are all the more necessary. Eye and ear become the channels of temptation and corruption,

and it is only through the senses that images of a higher sort can be awakened, nobler aspirations aroused, and virtuous action secured. Such notions . . . are amply verified in the history of Protestantism, the positive forms of which are coming back to ritual and liturgical observance." *

"In contemplating the Catholic Church," writes the great Protestant divine, Monod,† "it is impossible not to feel admiration and veneration for an institution, the most weighty in its influence, the most imposing in its duration, that the world has ever seen; by whose side the mightiest empires make but a poor comparison both as to time and place, an institution which has been from the first ages until now an ever-flowing fountain of devotedness, holiness, and civilisation, and whose history has developed itself, through the revolving centuries, with a logical power that at once confounds the reason and ravishes the imagination."

These are mere fragments of thought: but you may find them helpful in your studies; after all, it is only fair that in a general review of things the reasonableness of the Catholic Church and position should be thoroughly and fairly exhibited. I cannot write more now.

* Cardinal Satolli.

† *Revue historique*, August 1895.

5th November 189—.

It is evident from your letter that you are labouring under the conventional intellectual prejudice against the Catholic position. You seem to look upon it as in some sort of way opposed to culture and progress. But forgive me for saying that you are there falling into a very popular, but nevertheless very fundamental, error. You are confounding divine with human things, and are looking upon Revelation as you might look upon one of the sciences—human physiology, for instance—a sphere of research in which new truths are constantly being discovered, and old errors constantly being abandoned. But this is surely an entirely irrational and indefensible method of thought. You should remember that there are, after all, even in the natural order, some things in which improvement or change are impossible. We may, for instance, improve our houses, our clothes, our food; but, tampering with the fruit of the vine, with the atmosphere we breathe, or the water we drink, would mean spoiling them. Some of the gifts which God has given us perfect cannot be improved, they can only be adulterated. The Christian religion

is not a human science, the discovery of the human intellect, but the result of God's Revelation, and as such it cannot be changed or improved upon. We may find different and varying modes of defining and expressing it—as the perverse tendencies of human nature, the changing forms of human thought, and the increasing spiritual perceptions of holy men may render necessary—but adaptations and modifications such as the modern intellect and the claims of modern culture are said to demand, and as the Protestant developments are exhibiting, are most certainly an adulteration of the original Revelation itself, and, in their practical results, an intellectual return to the prechristian conception of things.

"The great error of all philosophic thought that is not guided by the Church is embraced between the blasphemy of handling the Creator, His existence, His attributes, as a subject for metaphysical dissection, and the sacrilege of treating God's most perfect and delicate handiwork, the human soul, as a piece of mechanism whose intricacies are to be unravelled, and the secrets of its organisms laid bare." *

"Rigidity of doctrinal definition," says Mr Mallock, "instead of preventing progress, is, within certain limits, one of the chief and most indispensable conditions of it. Unless certain elements in a religion always remain the same, the religion may change indefinitely, it may dissolve altogether, or metamor-

* Sheehan: *Triumph of Failure.*

phose itself into something else; but it will exhibit none of the features of a progressive and developing identity."

You must surely see the force and truth of this assertion if you will give it but a moment's serious thought and consideration.

You say that the modern intellect is impatient of fixed creeds and confessions of faith. Of course it is, and in all probability always will be. "One of the modern maladies," said your own Anglican Liddon, "is a morbidly active imagination which cannot acquiesce in the idea of fixed and unalterable truth."

It was to control and direct this impatient human intellect, and, in the matter of its theological speculations, to keep it within proper bounds, to guard the essentials of Revelation, that creeds and confessions of faith were constructed. To say that such confessions of faith are a hindrance to religious progress would be equivalent to saying that the acknowledgment of some ascertained fact in science, of some great fundamental truth, is an impediment to scientific progress and research. Can you not see how absurd and unfounded and ridiculous this charge is when it is carefully examined? That creeds are at best but imperfect attempts to express Divine and revealed truth, and that we have to use them because of our infirmity, what intelligent theologian would deny?

"Formerly," says St Hilary, "the Word of the Lord, Go and teach all nations, baptizing them, etc.,

was enough for the faithful. . . . But now, through the faults of heretics and blasphemers, we are compelled to do what is not permitted: to scale the lofty peaks, to express the inexpressible: to presume beyond what is given to us. Instead of accomplishing by faith alone what has been commanded us—to adore the Father, to venerate with Him the Son, to be filled with the Holy Ghost—we are compelled to elevate our humble speech to the point of making it tell forth the ineffable, and are enforced to fault by the fault of others; and thus, what should have remained shrouded in the religion of souls, is exposed to the peril of human language."

A modern Catholic writer expresses precisely the same thought. He says, "Creeds, confessions of faith, definitions of doctrine, are as essential to religion as words are to thoughts. There is something in us which compels us to reduce to system the various aspects of truth. But our synthesis must necessarily be imperfect. Human language has an essentially physical, sensual, materialistic character. 'Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichniss.' The best in this kind are but shadows. The symbolised is greater and deeper and older than the symbol."

This brings me to that other important point in your letter, *The Development of Doctrine*, a subject on which I can see at once you entertain the most astonishing misconception. The Apostles' and Nicene

Creeds, clearly, are illustrations of the development of doctrine, and if you reject the principle itself, you should by rights also reject and disown these creeds. But I ask you, do they, in their developed form, contain anything that is contrary to, or that does not fully and intelligently express what, the New Testament teaches, and what the first Christians believed? Do these creeds add anything to the original deposit of faith, to the essential truths revealed by God? Would you rather be without them to-day? Can you conceive of a Church passing through twenty centuries of incessant conflict with human thought and speculation without a lawful development of doctrine? Has not every human science such a development, such an increasingly fuller and more perfect and adequate expression of fundamental truth? "No doctrinal system," says Mr Mallock, "can continue to be accepted by the world, or can exercise any influence over it, if it does not expand with the expansion of knowledge generally." And even Farrar admits that "a religion which is not progressive will necessarily become corrupt."

It is a commonplace of Catholic theology to say that the faith is always one and the same at all times and in all places, but that modes of presenting the faith vary with time and place. What was implicit receives explicit statement, truths at first not set in formal relation to each other are placed in that setting, ancient premises are rounded off

with their logical conclusions; and all this as the necessities of the times, under the guiding providence of the Church, may demand and effect.

If you are really determined to study the distinctly Catholic aspect of the matter, you cannot, of course, do better than read Newman's famous treatise. To my own mind the arguments are absolutely convincing and conclusive, and I have never heard of any honest way of getting out of them. Acceptance of them is equivalent to acceptance of the doctrinal system of the Catholic Church.

But it is very difficult to say all that one would wish to say by way of letter. I can but advise and suggest and indicate. I know very little of your present state of mind, and cannot therefore tell how far you will follow out my suggestions. In one of our secular Encyclopædias I find the following:—

"There is beyond doubt, at these several points in the history of the Church, a certain growth or extension of Christian opinion called forth by, and corresponding to, the exigencies of the times. This is what is meant by the development of Catholic doctrine, and the name denotes with sufficient propriety an unquestionable series of phenomena. . . . It is vindicated on the ground that it is the rational and argumentative exposition of the truth. It represents this truth as it appears to the Christian reason in different ages. It is the expression of

what has been called the Christian consciousness working in contact with the text of Scripture. . . . The very idea of doctrine implies the employment of reason, the exercise of enquiry and argument upon the Divine truth of Scripture. . . . Such a process of investigation is necessarily variable and progressive. The Divine fact remaining the same, the human explanation or doctrine of it may and does greatly vary."

Father Tyrrell, of whom you may have heard, says, in one of his recent books: *—

"I can be sure that the babe of so many years ago is preserved identically in my own person, though I cannot exactly remember that earliest self or its states of consciousness, and so the mind of the nascent Church lives identically in the maturer mind of the present Church, though the remembrance of those earlier stages may be obscure and faulty."

And Mr Mallock, in his most interesting and suggestive book, *Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption in the Church of England,* has these very striking passages:—

"Rome admits that, within limits, the doctrine of the primitive Church was true, but does not admit that it expressed the *whole* truth. It *implied* the whole truth, just as every physical phenomenon implies the whole physics of the universe; but it expresses only so much of it as the primitive Church

* *Mind of the Church.*

could understand, a fuller understanding and expression of it being left for subsequent centuries" (p. 167).

"Let us take any living and growing thing, from an oak tree to a human being. The oak tree with its mass of leaves, branches, and timber, develops from an acorn which would lie in a baby's hand; but the tons of material which make up the developed tree do not exist in the acorn. They are drawn from external sources, and, if otherwise assimilated, they would make up not an oak but an elm. . . .

"In the same way the Church, according to the Roman theory, grows as a teaching body by the assimilation of beliefs and philosophies, which need, in their original form, have been no more Christian or supernatural than the food eaten by a child is, in the original form, human. . . . " (p. 173).

And, speaking more particularly of the two great Catholic doctrines of the Holy Trinity and Transubstantiation, Mr Mallock writes:—

"Neither of these, for instance, is supposed by Roman theology to exhaust the mystery with which it deals. If, as thought and knowledge develop, and men's spiritual conception expand, the Trinity and the Sacrament of the Altar reveal themselves under new aspects, this is nothing but what Roman theology would regard as perfectly natural; but any fuller comprehension of either mystery which

may be in store for us, would, according to that theology, not supersede or change the doctrines which the Church has already formulated with regard to it. It would merely add to this meaning, endowing it with a new profundity; and such an enlargement of this meaning would be possible only on this condition—that the original doctrines remained with their validity unimpaired. We may some day learn to appreciate other aspects of the Trinity than those which are comprehended by the terms 'substance' and 'person,' but, unless the Trinity is to evaporate into a mere literary symbol, the doctrine of substance and person must be kept intact as a statement of what is absolutely true so far as the statement goes. We may some day perceive that Christ's bodily presence on the altar means more than could be expressed by the philosophical doctrine of Transubstantiation; but this perception that His bodily presence is more wonderful than we had once thought it, must be based on a continuance of belief which assures us that it is not less real" (pp. 151-2).

Respecting your further point, *The Primacy of St Peter*, my own opinion is, that it is scarcely necessary to go beyond the letter of the New Testament. The man who does not see the primacy there must have played tricks with his judgment, and will not see it anywhere. If it were a doctrine of the Protestant Church, what a splendid Scriptural

argument they would make of it, and how well they would defend it! As it is, they have to think of new intellectual and theological subtleties by which it can be most successfully evaded. But do their weak and sometimes somewhat frivolous arguments really convince *you?* Surely you must see that, given the records of Holy Scripture, the necessary development of the doctrine historically and ecclesiastically, the constant presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost, the Catholic doctrine of the Papal Supremacy as we have it now is surely more than justified. It has a threefold and immovable foundation, and is, moreover, a most reasonable thing, both *à priori* and *à posteriori.* Modern non-Catholic religious developments would justify it and would establish its Divine character had it never been justified and established before. See what the Anglican and other communions are without it.

Have you seen Lightfoot's note in his *Essay on St Peter in Rome* (Clem. Rom. ii., p. 481)? I often wonder whether the great anti-Catholic scholar was fully conscious of the immense import of his words. He says this:—

"Even a cursory glance at the history of the Apostles, so far as it appears in the Gospel records, reveals a certain primacy of St Peter among the twelve. He holds the first place in all the lists; he has a precedence of *responsibility* and of temptation; he sets the example of moral courage and

moral lapse; above all, *he receives special pastoral charges.*"

I forget whether it was Lightfoot, too, who wrote the following. It may possibly be from one of Bright's books:—

"The apostolic office was a gradual development, and became identified and centred in that see which was best calculated, both by prestige and by unswerving orthodoxy, to maintain and perpetuate it."

Bright certainly wrote the following:—

"The Roman Church was trusted for its traditional immunity from heretical speculation. It was a typical Church, a sample Church, a miniature of the whole body; and by referring to it one could see what was held by all."

Respecting your objections to the *Scholastic system of the Catholic Church,* and the use of a dead language for her great liturgical acts of worship, I am surprised that this should be a difficulty occurring to your mind. So far from being a means of estranging simple minds from the worship of the Church, it is the most effectual means of attracting them to it by preserving and presenting to the eye and ear the one well-known form and words, irrespective of differences of country or of language. You seem to me to be dwelling upon some imaginary objection to the use of the Latin tongue in exhibiting the fixed and permanent forms of prayer, and to be

quite oblivious of the immense advantages and blessings which appertain to it.

A Protestant foreigner, for instance, anxious to attend the services of the Anglican Church, must first of all make a careful study of the English language before he can in any intelligent way take part in them or profit by them. A Catholic, who from a child has known the Latin of the Mass, can attend the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice in any country of the whole world the very first day in which he may happen to be in it, and thus realise his immense privileges and the magnificent birthright to which he is the natural and lawful heir. By the sin of man, human language was confounded, affecting his well-being in both the natural and the spiritual order; by the redemption of man, the broken harmony, however imperfectly, is restored, and all the families and generations of men are once more enabled to worship God in one universal and world-embracing tongue. I know of nothing which so exhibits and secures the Catholicity of the Church as the use of the Latin tongue in her glorious liturgy, and instead of cavilling at such an institution, spiritual men should thank God for it, seeing that it is a gift which could not possibly have emanated from the fallen intellect of man.

That the use of the Latin seems strange and unnatural to a Protestant incidentally present at Catholic worship, is of course very natural. But

so does any religious service appear to a person unfamiliar with the language of the particular country in which it is taking place; so would the Mass appear to an English Catholic in any foreign country of the language of which he is ignorant, were it the law of the Church to construct her great Offices in the particular vernacular of each country. The nonsense which some people are apt to talk on this subject is past comprehension. There are, I know, quite intelligent persons who will persist in saying that Catholics worship God in a language they do not understand, wilfully ignoring the fact that the Latin of their prayer-books has been familiar to them from their childhood—to say nothing of the accompanying vernacular of the entire office of the Mass to be found in such Catholic prayer-books. The assertions commonly made on these points are illustrative of the profound ignorance of the average Protestant of all relating to the usages of the great historic Church.

I should like you to read the following note, which I have taken from one of Father Tyrrell's recent books. It occurs in an essay on *The Use of Scholasticism*, and expresses very admirably, and in infinitely better and more weighty language than I have at command, what I would wish to say to you on this subject:—

"So, albeit that Divine faith, and in a large measure human tradition, is the means whereby

religious truth is apprehended by the millions of Christendom, and indeed by all in so far as they are Christians; yet the Church acknowledges the need of some sort of public philosophy whereby the very notion of faith may be indicated, the *data* of faith set in order, expressed, and translated into the mind-language and word-language of the day, and not only defended from the charge of conflict with demonstrated truth, but in some measure synthetised with secular knowledge into one organic whole. Still more needful is such a corrective rationalism when it is a question, not of the infallible religious data of Divine faith, but the very fallible religious data of human tradition. . . .

"For this end the Church has always implicitly or explicitly availed herself of some kind of philosophy in giving expression to her teaching. Those who find fault with her for this forget that there is a philosophy, nay, a metaphysics, implied in the common language of the rudest savage or the simplest child. It is not only the Gospel of St John, but the Sermon on the Mount, which depends for its intelligibility on a presupposed philosophy. . . And since Catholicism is the religion of humanity, of all ages and countries, of all levels of culture, it cannot afford to make itself dependent on that which is a contingent, local, and mutable, but must in some sense speak a Catholic and universal language, and rise above the differences of philo-

sophies, and grasp that which is common to all. How, as a matter of fact, has the Church dealt with this problem?

"She has taken a world language which, when living, had a sort of territorial universality, and which, being now dead, has the greater universality of an universal and immutable standard—a language the meaning of whose terms is no longer fluctuating but fixed, and in which her teaching, once stereotyped, can be translated into the living languages of various countries as faithfully as possible."

What you say in the concluding line of your letter respecting the Catholic doctrine on the *Necessity of the Church to Salvation*, is, of course, wholly unfounded, and might be corrected by reference to any simple authorised exposition of Catholic teaching. The Church, I need hardly say, has never taught such nonsense. Unfortunately, even intelligent and otherwise honourable Protestants will not take the trouble to consult such Catholic books of reference, knowing full well that they would then have to abandon those time-worn and traditional misrepresentations which their souls love so dearly, and which appeal so strongly to a certain inferior order of mind.

The popular versions of Catholic teaching are, as I have told you many times, absurd caricatures, which often cause us the most unbounded amuse-

ment, which in these days, however, are beginning to have the very opposite effect to that intended on really intelligent minds. Thoughtful persons, knowing full well that the intelligent Catholics of his acquaintance would never subscribe to ideas so irrational and preposterous as those propagated by these enemies of truth, will often begin to make inquiries on their own account, frequently with the result that they experience a violent reaction which in many instances ends in their own submission to the Church.

Now, I am not an authorised exponent of Catholic doctrine, and certainly not a theologian. Instead of giving you my own version, therefore, of the Church's teaching on this subject, I will give you quotations from the writings of three modern thinkers, one of whom has approached the subject from the standpoint of a non-Catholic, and in his capacity as a literary man, and two of whom are eminent and responsible Catholic authorities. Consider and weigh their words well, and if you too have publicly or privately misrepresented the Church's teaching on this subject, and have thus hindered the progress of truth, be an honest man, acknowledge your error, and cry: *Pater peccavi.*

I. "There is no point, probably, connected with this question, about which the general world is so misinformed and ignorant, as the sober but boundless charity of what it calls the anathematising

Church. So little, indeed, is this charity understood generally, that to assert it seems a startling paradox. Most paradoxes are doubtless in reality the lies they at first seem to be, but not so this one. It is the simple statement of fact. Never was there a religious body, except the Roman, that laid the intense stress she does on all her dogmatic teachings, and had yet the justice that comes of sympathy for those that cannot receive them. She condemns no goodness, she condemns even no earnest worship, though it be outside her pale. On the contrary, she declares explicitly that a knowledge of *the one true God, our Creator and Lord,* may be attained to by the *natural light of human reason,* meaning by *reason* faith unenlightened by revelation; and she declares those to be anathema who deny this."—W. H. Mallock: *Is Life worth Living?*

II. "Christ founded a Church, and intrusted to her the means of salvation: hence, objectively speaking and in general, the necessity of belonging to that Church. Those who recognise this fact, yet refuse to enter the Church, evidently deprive themselves of the means of salvation, besides disobeying the ordinance of God. Those who remain outside the Church because they are convinced that their own religion is the true one, possess the means of salvation in an imperfect manner, or perhaps not at all. Should they be lost, it will not be because they were non-Catholics, but on account of the

sins they have committed. Such is the meaning of the proposition *extra Ecclesiam nulla salus.* It is, however, to be noted that, while the Church maintains this doctrine as to the conditions fixed by Christ for salvation, she forbids us to pass sentence upon the lot of any one who is called from this life, declaring that the destiny of every man is a question for God's judgment alone."—Cardinal Satolli.

III. The holy and humble men of heart who do not know her (the Catholic Church), or who in good faith reject her, she commits with confidence to God's uncovenanted mercies; and these she knows are infinite: but, except as revealed to her, she can of necessity say nothing distinct about them. It is admitted by the world at large, that of her supposed bigotry she has no bitterer or more extreme exponents than the Jesuits, and this is what a Jesuit theologian says upon this matter: "*A heretic, so long as he believes his sect to be more or equally deserving of belief, has no obligation to believe the Church . . . (and) when men who have been brought up in heresy are persuaded from boyhood that we impugn and attack the word of God, that we are idolaters, pestilent deceivers, and are therefore to be shunned as pestilences, they cannot, while this persuasion lasts, with a safe conscience hear us.*" *

* A. Busenbaum, quoted by Cardinal Newman in his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, p. 65.

Thus, for those without her, the Church has one condemnation only. Her anathemas are on none but those who reject her with their eyes open, by tampering with a conviction that she really is the truth. These are condemned, not for not seeing that the teacher is true, but because, having really seen this, they continue to close their eyes to it. They will not obey when they know they ought to obey. And thus the moral offence of a Catholic in denying some recondite doctrine does not lie merely, and need not lie at all, in the immediate bad effects that such a denial would necessitate; but in the disobedience, the self-will, and the rebellion that must in such a case be both a cause and a result of it.

You might also like to know what Cardinal Manning, for whose works you always professed great admiration, says on this subject:—

"The Church teaches that men may be inculpably out of its pale. Now, they are inculpably out of it who are, and have always been, either physically or morally unable to see their obligation to submit to it. And they only are culpably out of it who are both physically and morally able to know that it is God's will they should submit to the Church, and, either knowing it, will not obey that knowledge, or, not knowing it, are culpable of that ignorance."

I have thus tried to answer the various points of your letter to the best of my knowledge and ability,

not always by giving you my own imperfect version of things, but by quoting from authors of standing and repute whose authority and the truth of whose statement no person will dispute. I had, as you know, no intention to enter upon a controversial treatment of the subject with you. On the contrary, I pointed out to you that for me it would be next to impossible to treat this great subject from any but the distinctly Catholic point of view, seeing that I consider Catholicism to be the only historical, traditional, and rational form of Christianity, and that you had better go for advice elsewhere. I went on writing because I did not think that your studies would so soon bring you face to face with the Catholic system, and that you would launch out into a series of deliberate attacks on my position. I suspect that you have a distinct aim in doing this: but, having entered upon such a course, you cannot blame me for trying to make the best possible defence, and for beginning to look upon you as a possible convert. I therefore give you fair warning. If after this you persist in this correspondence, I shall strike the hardest possible blows for my Church, deliberately pointing out to you what I believe to be the incurable weaknesses of your and all other Protestant systems of thought; and I shall work and pray hard in order to make the truth prevail over you. So let there be fair play and a distinct understanding. I am writing out copies of

all the letters I am sending you. Yours, of course, are very interesting to me: but, so far, they are merely the echoes of the popular objections to, and misconceptions of, the teaching of the Church.

To that incidental remark of yours with reference to what you term "Catholic servility," I really have no answer. When will the enemies of religion understand that there is nothing servile in willing submission to a rightful authority, and that the homage paid to truths revealed by God, so far from being a bondage, is the noblest use to which we can put our liberty?

With regard to the modern Anglican claim to Catholicity and historic continuity, I should like you to read what an Anglican clergyman wrote on that subject in the public press not very long ago. It was reprinted in the *Weekly Register* of September 1897, and I felt, when I read it, that I should like to know that man personally, and to shake him by the hand. He is an honest man, and one who has the courage of his convictions, and I personally respect him infinitely more, and consider him much nearer the Church, than those Protestant ritualists who are aping our ceremonies and imitating our practices. Let me have the paper back when you have read it.

"If we Protestants," writes this clergyman, "we old-fashioned Church of England folk, have to confess that the vagaries of the new religion invented by the

Oxford men in 1833 have put us to shame, and made our Church appear grotesque, yet Catholics have good reason to feel flattered that so large a section of Anglicans have devoted the last sixty years to perfecting, as much as they can, this ingenious imitation of the Catholic Church. Of course, it can never be the real thing. You may mould a statue into the closest resemblance to the human form, but you can never make it breathe and live. So you may dress a man in all the vestments of Catholicism, but it will never make him a Catholic priest. *We* feel small because the larger part of our Church has taken to imitating the Ancient Church; but Catholics ought to take it as an unwilling testimony to the soundness of their position that they are being so closely imitated. They began by imitating the Catholic idea of the Church. Up till 1833, men had agreed to look upon our Communion as what it really is, a department of the State, set up to present a respectable religion of sufficiently elastic views to include people of almost any and of no opinions. But now they began to call themselves members of the Catholic Church. They began to talk of Dissent as heresy and schism. They began to warn people that they would be unsafe if they continued in separation from the Church of England. To condemn separation was a very comic attitude from gentlemen who belonged to a Communion whose origin and *raison d'être* was separation; but then High Churchmen

never had any sense of humour. To say that it was a sin for Presbyterians to secede from the Church of England, but no sin for Anglicans to have seceded from the Church of Rome, certainly showed a good deal of muddle-headedness; but, then, High Churchmen never had any sense of logic. But still, the imitated idea of the Catholic Church was the sincerest flattery of the Catholic position. After a few years of indecision, and a good deal of hesitation and controversy among the Puseyites as to what doctrine of Holy Communion they should invent and attribute to the Church of England, some of the more ardent spirits in the party concluded that it would be a grand stroke of policy to imitate the Catholic Mass. Now, the Mass had utterly ceased in our Communion. After June 24, 1559, it had become a penal offence to say Mass. So effectually was the Mass driven away from us, that Thomas Becon, who had been chaplain to Cranmer, could write:—

> Quisque amas verumque Deum, veramque salutem,
> Vive, vale, ride, plaudeque; *Missa fuit!*

Missa fuit—the Mass was a thing of the past. But though the real thing had gone from us, these courageous Anglicans resolved on introducing a copy of it. Vestments and music were brought into requisition: in many cases, the prayers from the Roman Missal were placed on our 'altars,' and some clergymen even said the service in an inaudible

voice, so that it might sound like Latin, and more closely resemble the real thing. Gradually the passion for imitation spread into the very highest quarters. The Catholic Church, whenever any doctrinal matter has been in dispute, has ever held a General Council to declare what in her judgment is the true Faith of Christendom. When the Anglican Bishops—who at first had sturdily opposed the new religion—became imbued with High Church ideas, they resolved on a bold counterfeit of a Council. And so, from every English-speaking part of the globe, they flocked to a Pan-Anglican Synod. Again a good imitation, but *only* an imitation; for whereas, when a Council spoke, every Catholic had to obey, if a Pan-Anglican Synod ever spoke, every Anglican could snap his fingers in the Right Reverend faces of the speakers. And so, because the Pope issues Bulls, the two Archbishops of our Church, fired with the holy ambition of being like him, this year positively issued a Bull themselves. But, again, not the real thing. For when the Pope speaks, all controversy is at end; but when the Archbishops spoke, a goodly number of parsons, myself included, openly repudiated their Graces' utterances. And so it is in vain for the dear High Church folks to quote the Bull with its Latin beginning, to make it look like a genuine thing; for the only result of the whole matter has been to make the Church of England look profoundly ridiculous. And if the passion for imitation has got into

the highest quarters, so also has it affected the minutest details. The favourite hymns of the Anglicans are imitated from the Catholics. What can be funnier than to hear the Puseyites singing about the 'faith of their fathers'? Funny, yet by a singular Nemesis it happens to be literally true; in the literal sense, their religion, being some fifty years old, is only the religion of their fathers and uncles."

5th December.

Your letter of last night has given me a great deal of food for reflection. The subject is such a very big and solemn one, and I am growing keenly sensible of the grave responsibilities which the writing of letters on such a subject, and under circumstances like the present, involves. Before attempting to reply to your questions, therefore, I must remind you once more of what I said to you in my letter of the 5th November (on the subject of the Church). I gave you fair warning. I pointed out to you that, if you persisted in this correspondence and provoked controversy by challenging my position, you would be putting me on my defence, and it would become my duty, as a convinced and loyal Catholic, to strike the hardest blow possible for my Church, and to try and convince you of the utter impossibility of all the Protestant systems of thought. I must, and do, take your present letter, therefore, as an indication that you deliberately accept the new situation, and that you are fully aware of what you are in for.

I must confess that all you say in your present

letter goes to confirm that conviction which has been forming in my mind for many years past, and to which I have often given expression in my discussions and arguments with you: that the main difficulty which lies at the root of the great controversy between Protestantism and the Catholic Church is a philosophical and not a theological one. In my opinion, Protestant error is due to a fundamental philosophical misconception of the very nature of the Christian Revelation, and of the central principle underlying the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the terrible confusion of ideas from which we are suffering so much at this present time is due to the fact that by far the larger number of persons who are seeking the solution of the difficulty, are losing sight of first principles and are arguing in a circle. The correctness of this view is best illustrated by the controversy respecting the Holy Eucharist. Most people seem to imagine that it is all a question of the words of institution and of the discovery of the correct interpretation of those words, and that the mystery is solved when they think they have discovered that interpretation. But this surely is a fundamental error due to that tendency to superficial thinking which is so characteristic of this modern age, and which is so frequently exhibited in connection with religious controversy. For it must be clear that, in considering the various interpretations of the original words of institution

which have been offered by Christian Theology, individual intellectual tendencies, and the effects of educational and social environments, the peculiar theological bias of parents, are apt to play a vital and prominent part, and are calculated to prejudice the mind in some particular direction, and that it could never have been according to the Divine purpose that so great a matter, and one attended by such serious issues, should be made dependent upon such contingencies. A single moment's accurate thinking ought to disclose the philosophic fallacy underlying this mode of reasoning, and ought to make it clear that the truth should not be sought for, and will certainly never be discovered, by such a method.

But, begin with correct and historical views of the Incarnation, of God meeting man in man, in response to the needs and requirements of his nature, and of operating upon him objectively as well as subjectively, by definite objective institutions, and the better portion of the difficulty vanishes at once. The historic and traditional view of the Holy Eucharist then becomes the only possible and rational one, while the Protestant view is seen to be wholly unphilosophic, illogical, and inconsistent.

I am speaking, of course, from the standpoint of an intelligent inquirer, not from that of the wholehearted Catholic, for whom authority, as you know, is the ultimate court of appeal, believing that authority, as he does, to be of Divine and infallible origin.

Remember also, that you will never get a fair and correct view of Catholic teaching, and indeed of the Christian Revelation, so long as you take one doctrine out of the system and begin to examine it by itself, without due and full regard to other doctrines with which it is intimately intermingled and connected, and from which it cannot safely be divorced. I am not sure that this dissection and examination of isolated doctrines is not one of the gravest of all the grave mistakes made by Protestantism. Christianity, it should be remembered, forms a connected whole of teaching, commands, exhortations, and historical facts, each dependent on and explained by the other. Only a few can perceive this connection, and still fewer, or perhaps even none, can keep it ever clearly before their minds. Opponents direct their assaults only against isolated particulars, taken out of their proper connection, and thus the attack may easily seem stronger and more plausible than the defence.

Not very long ago, when returning from early Mass one morning, I wrote something in my diary on the subject of the Holy Eucharist. Some weeks ago I should not have dreamt of allowing you to see it, lest I should wound your feelings and perhaps arouse your anger. But, after your last letter, I see no reason why I should not send it to you. Of course you will have to make allowances. It is not a theological

treatise, and it was not written with any definite purpose in view. It expresses what I thoroughly believe, and what I strongly felt on the subject at that particular moment. I shall be glad if you will let me have the paper back some time, so that I may restore it to my diary. But, before reading it, will you read the subjoined notes? Some of them are my own, some are from works which I have read at various times, but whose respective authors I could not in each case name now—all of them stray and disconnected thoughts appealing to me at some particular time, or perhaps expressing, with exceptional force and clearness, what I felt to be true. They may suggest to you new lines of thought, and throw fresh light on a very old subject. At any rate, they do not contain any of those wretched shibboleths of popular controversy which we have had *ad nauseam* lately, and which have no longer any meaning for thinking minds.

In now re-reading these notes, I am struck by the one taken from your own Anglican Archbishop Magee's celebrated sermon on *The Christian Theory of the Origin of Christian Life*, which was preached before a meeting of the British Association a good many years ago. The good Archbishop could scarcely have been aware how thoroughly Catholic his "theory" is, how subversive of the Protestant *subjective* notion of Christianity, and what a splendid Catholic he would have made had he followed out his theory to its legitimate conclusion.

"Our claim, then, for Christ and for Christianity," said the Archbishop, "is this, that Christ our Lord and Master founded on earth a kingdom within which is to be found a life that is not to be found beyond its limits; a kingdom which is not in 'words but in power'—that is to say, is not produced by any words or ideas alone, however true or however beautiful, but by a power, a vital force peculiar to itself; and that this force is the indwelling life of Jesus Christ—God and man. In a word, we claim for Christianity that it is not a code of morals merely, not a philosophy, nor a creed, nor a system of religious discipline, but that over and above all these it is a life, A NEW AND REAL VITAL FORCE IN THE WORLD; a life with its own conditions of existence, its own laws of development, its own peculiar phenomena, as real and as distinct as those of any other form of life which science investigates and classifies; and that this life is in Christ; for this is our record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a continuation of the Incarnation. An event so great in its bearing upon men's spiritual nature was not a single act in time, but a great spiritual truth, to be continually kept before the mind—an eternal and ever-continuing event in the world of spirit, of which the celebration on earth is the reflection and representation. This alone adequately explains the statements of Scripture.

It was the faith of the Universal Church before its divisions."

"Our nature does not contain within itself the power of self-renovation and self-regulation. Hence the necessity of introducing into it a supernatural, Divine element."

"The Church teaches that Holy Mass is virtually a repetition and presentation of what took place at the Last Supper. When our Lord said, 'Do this,' He did not refer, as Protestants say, to the breaking of the bread, but to what He had just done Himself, *i.e.*, constituting bread and wine His own body and blood. The Mass, in its highest meaning, is thus a constant setting forth of the Lord's death—an act in one sense certainly performed once for all, but, in another sense, an eternal act to be brought to the knowledge of men in all times and places, and in succeeding generations by acts in time. Christ was Himself the High Priest, who offered Himself to the Eternal Father (He was also the Victim), and thus the celebrating priest stands in the place of Christ, perpetuating the sacrifice of Christ after a mystical manner. Transubstantiation makes the presence of Christ objective, and takes the whole out of the sphere of the subjective, thus bringing unspeakable comfort to the human soul. The devout Christian discerns the Divine Presence under the Eucharistic veil intuitively and by faith. The heart requires a Christ

external to itself; One on whom the soul can lean. The subjective conception necessarily involves the element of doubt. By the assured Presence of Christ the craving of the heart is stilled. Form and substance are the conceptions of Time and Space; the mystery behind them we cannot fully fathom in our present state, since we do not understand the mystery of Life."

"The great central thought in the Mass is the intimate supernatural union of God with man; it is a participation in the life of God. Why need we supernatural food? Because we are born to a supernatural life, and it is the deposition of the germ of eternal life in a mortal creature."

"By organic connection with Adam, we have come under the law of death; by organic connection with Christ, we come under the law of life."

"If Christ were not really and actually present (objectively, to speak in human language) in the Holy Eucharist, and as the real Victim, we could only unite ourselves to Him in a moral sense; indeed, we could not participate in the fruit of the Sacrifice in any true and real manner."

"The poor, imprisoned soul shut up within the darkness of death, is a hungering, magical fire which attracts from the Incarnation of Christ the reopened substantiality of God, and out of this swallowing or

nourishing she produces a body similar to Divinity. Thus, then, the poor soul will be clothed with a body of light comparable to the fire in a burning wick."

"Sin is inherited; its elements are reproduced in the child—they are physically transmitted. Why, then, should it seem strange that the cleansing, opposing, counteracting element should be physically imparted? Both, although thus imparted and transmitted, are manifestations in the supernatural sphere."

"The natural daily eating and drinking is really a profound mystery. In order to maintain existence, we daily assimilate food, and are thus constantly kept in union with surrounding nature. Seeds and herbs and animals yield up their life and substance to minister to ours, to sustain our bodily life. We obey the law of nature, but we cannot tell how it is that the dead particles become part of ourselves: we cannot see how the things we eat and drink, so indifferent in themselves, can sustain our organism and prolong our life. But we do not disobey the law of nature because we cannot fathom the mystery. We know that to disobey would be to die. God evidently acts in a similar fashion in spiritual things. Christ is the Source of life in a manner we do not fully discern. We can only see the outward manifestation of the life. Its source and centre is in Him, and it is therefore reasonable that we should, for

spiritual nutriment, resort to the Source from which it emanates."

"There is no one who believes the bread and wine in the Eucharist to be what our Lord calls them—His body and blood—but believes also that the manner of our Lord's presence in the Holy Sacrament is not according to the natural manner of bodies, but is sacramental after the manner of a spirit—an absolute mystery, to be apprehended by faith."

"Our Lord is *in loco*, in Heaven, not (in the same sense) in the Sacrament. He is present in the Sacrament only in substance, substantive, and substance does not require or imply the occupation of place. But if place is excluded from the idea of the Sacramental Presence, therefore division or distance from Heaven is excluded also; for distance implies a measurable interval, and such there cannot be except between places. Moreover, if the idea of distance is excluded, therefore is the idea of motion. Our Lord, then, neither descends from Heaven upon our altars, nor moves when carried in procession. The visible species change their position, but He does not move. He is in the Holy Eucharist after the manner of a spirit. We do not know how; we have no parallel to the 'how' in our experience. We can only say that He is present, not according to the natural manner of bodies, but sacramentally.

His presence is substantial, spirit-wise, sacramental; an absolute mystery; not against reason, however, but against imagination, and must be received by faith."

Cardinal Newman: *Via Media.*

"The idea of Sacrifice, of course, is connected with that of the Atonement. There should be no moral difficulty. The Jewish sacrifices were sensual, carnal, suggestive; the Christian is the highest spiritual form of sacrifice:—absolute obedience unto death—the most unhesitating self-surrender on behalf of others. In commemorating or presenting to believers the Christian sacrifice, ministers are in the highest and best sense of the term sacrificing priests. This aspect is unavoidable in the light of Jewish theology and the plain statements of Scripture. It is the historical idea, as Gore says, respecting the Christian ministry."

"It is simply inconceivable, and a thought not to be tolerated even for a moment, that for 1600 years God should have been indifferent concerning His truth, and should then have raised up people (and what sort of people!) to restore it."

Let us say with Erasmus: "Never have we been, and never shall we be, persuaded that Jesus Christ, Who is truth and love itself, could have suffered His Church to remain for so many centuries committed to

an error so abominable as the adoration of a mere piece of bread."

In his critical examination of Mrs Humphrey Ward's *Ethical Christianity*, Mr W. H. Mallock writes: "Now let us suppose that Socrates, as he drank the cup of hemlock, had asked his friends to celebrate the anniversary of his death by meeting together and drinking a cup of wine to his memory. Would Mrs Ward maintain that for a Greek, in subsequent ages, the drinking of such a cup of wine was essential in any way to an assimilation of the truths which animated the Socratic teaching? Would she venture to speak of it as the food of some mystical union with Socrates? She obviously would not. She would reject such language as an expression of the grossest superstition. Why, then, if Christ was a mere man like Socrates, can our drinking to-day a cup of wine in His memory, be in any way essential to our following His moral example, or be a vital assimilation of Christ's view of God? How can it be the food of any mystical union with Him, any more than it can be the food of some mystical union with Socrates." Or, as Mr Mallock says elsewhere: "How can it in any way be more essential to the Christian religion than eating plum-pudding at Christmas is essential to Christian goodwill, or than eating goose at Michaelmas is essential to English patriotism?"

From my Diary.

Went to early Mass this (Monday) morning, in spite of the fearful weather. The Church was very chilly, and it was certainly a struggle to get out of bed so early. But there was a very definite and lasting reward. How strange that we should be so slow to avail ourselves of this, the most priceless of all privileges, and by a renewal of the soul's union with the Eternal, to gain the only true strength for the conflicts and contrasts and jarrings of the daily life! What a beautiful thing the Mass really is; how entirely it recognises, and meets, and fits in with, the longings and cravings of our human nature! How strangely and mysteriously the soul is calmed and comforted and uplifted before the awful Presence on the Altar! It is the one spot in this striving, restless world where human voices are hushed, where the veil which hides the mystery of life is lifted, and where two worlds and two states of being meet. What would one be and do without the Mass, without the consciousness that God has come down to abide with man, to help him, to sustain him, and to draw him, by the mystic cord

of love, into the sphere of Divine forces and influences!

It is a mystery to me how the Reformers could have parted with this the noblest and most soul-stirring of all Divine truths, how they could have hoped to build up a permanent religious system upon what is really the Divine absence. If the Incarnation be true and have any meaning for us at all, it is surely the return of God to man, the re-establishment of union between Himself and that part of us which is divine, and His assured and permanent presence with us in a form independent of all human speculation and imagining. How can any sensible person ever have imagined that a Christianity of which this central truth has ceased to form the most essential part, would continue to command the love and veneration of the human heart.

The world before the coming of Christ had felt God, and had ignorantly worshipped Him; had at best seen Him as an astronomer sees a distant star, once in a way, and through a powerful telescope. But it had always seen a distant and an absent God—a God to be felt by the action of His law and the movement of the conscience, but nevertheless far removed from the sorrow and sin-stricken heart. And, throughout the ages, the yearning of the heart had been for a near and present God, for a close union of the soul with the Eternal. And what is Revelation but the Divine response to this hungering; the gradual and progressive

Divine approach towards man, proportioned to his spiritual growth and development, and to the degree of his earnestness and sincerity. And finally, in the fulness of time, there comes the last break in the cloud; the Divine radiance shines through it, and God once more approaches man. He comes in the form of man, to be with him and to dwell in him. And for centuries spiritual and God-enlightened men receive the great truth, their souls absorb it and feed on it, and they are by it lifted up and carried beyond themselves and their natural powers. The entire race is elevated to a higher life; to the noblest conception of God, of duty, of holiness; of art, too, and of culture, and of true education. All life is transformed and sanctified, and a new and glorious morning is dawning upon the earth.

But, ere the great Divine process of enlightenment is yet completed, the second power in the universe has already accomplished his work, and, acting on the innate perverseness of man's nature, has once more caused it to obscure the truth, has again driven the present Deity from His temple, and has boldly proclaimed it a higher state of moral attainment to be without Him. It has desecrated His Churches and demolished His dwelling-places, and in their stead has erected altars to an unknown God. What blindness, what perversion, what foolishness! What a sacrilegious trifling with the best and truest and holiest of gifts! Once more, from a thousand hearts,

there goes up to heaven the bitter cry, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." And intelligent men are asked to believe that Jesus Christ, Who they persist in saying is truth and love, has for centuries suffered His Church to remain committed to an error, an abominable superstition; and, mark it well! by the propagation of that superstition to have kindled in them the highest life, the noblest virtues, the most enduring and heroic self-sacrifice and self-abandonment. It is astounding to think that men have been found to defend this view, that they can be found to defend it to-day. Surely the very thought of the Incarnation implies the conception of "Emmanuel, God with us," of God's coming to be permanently with man; of an objective, tangible Divine Presence in our midst, as the heart desires it, and as the limitations of our nature demand it. What have we gained in becoming Christians, if the God-man, the Life-Giver, be no longer in our midst, if we are once more to begin seeking and feeling after Him?

And how has this terrible perversion, this religious anachronism, come about? Surely and clearly, by the pride and perverse foolishness of the human intellect, by the craving for that false freedom of the soul which all intelligent and thoughtful persons know to be the most terrible bondage. In Germany, a discontented and apostate but clever monk, who has mistaken his vocation, appeals to the very weakest

side of human nature, and utilising the exceptional failings of the Church's instruments, raises aloft the torch of revolution. He makes himself the centre of a new religious system, falsifying history and misinterpreting the Scriptures. He sets before the world a lower and easier and more human standard of duty and responsibility, and, in the course of time, undoes the very foundations of the religion of the Incarnation. He drives the living and revealed God from His temple. And poor human nature succumbs to the spell. It yields to the temptation. It returns, like the dog to its vomit. It has neither the knowledge nor the opportunity to examine for itself. It forgets all the lessons of the past. It believes the words of the monk because it wants to believe them. And, terrible thought! entire nations are drawn into the vortex; they repeat the monk's shibboleth and proclaim it a higher truth, and, calling to their aid poor, fallen, and distorted human reason, they fall away from the revealed and incarnate and present God.

In England, a debased and brutal king fails to obtain a license for debauchery from the head of the great historic Church. He flatters and makes concessions, and raves and storms in turn, to attain his end; but finally breaks with the centre of Christian unity and sets up a new religious institution, which he backs up with the imported ideas of the German monk. He enforces acceptance of these ideas by the sternest and bloodiest of human laws. And, in the

process of time, he unchristianises the entire nation, imposes upon it a doctrine which no apostle or martyr or saint or doctor of the Church ever taught or believed, and which is foreign to the entire spirit and tenor of the teaching of Jesus Christ.

And in England, too, poor human nature ultimately yields its submission; it is hanged and drawn and quartered, and otherwise outraged, in order to secure the desired end; and having once adopted the new and hated and impossible creed, it sets itself the task of defending and of justifying it. Learned men are commissioned to establish its reasonableness, its historical veracity. Texts and patristic writings are distorted and twisted in order to yield unnatural and unreasonable meanings, and the Church of the Redeemer is attacked and assaulted and defamed, and finally, by the exercise of the temporal power, trodden under foot.

Can any reasonable person, still possessing the power of independent thought, deny the truth of this indictment? Does any man of education doubt it in his heart of hearts? Can there be any question as to what the ultimate verdict of history will be? Does not the very movement of spiritual men towards the doctrine of the true Church proclaim the truth with the loudest possible voice? Do they not admit it, so far as such an admission is possible and permissible for them? And why do they not admit it freely and fully, and thus undo the mischief as it

befits honourable and right-thinking men? Because pride bars the way. It is difficult and humiliating to admit the error of 300 years. It is hard to strike the breast and to exclaim, *peccavi*. Better by far, and easier, to maintain and defend the great lie, to write learned treatises, and to attempt to prove the impossible; better to make a thousand absurd compromises, to occupy intellectual positions, arousing the ridicule of the world; better to let Christianity itself come to grief, to estrange the hearts of men from Christ and His truth, to let them drift into indifference and unbelief, to teach the most grotesque and contradictory and unchristian of Christian doctrines; better anything and everything than to bow the knee and to acknowledge the mistake—to say: Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner. Ah! one must have a little more than the ordinary knowledge of human nature to understand the whole thing—to put one's finger upon the real root of the matter.

But do the champions of these various anti-Catholic systems of religious thought really fail to see that the position is untenable, that truth is one and indestructible, and that, upon the ruins of the past, the old and true Church is gradually but firmly re-establishing herself? England is torn asunder by religious dissensions, sect separating from sect in endless division and redivision, each single Christian doctrine the subject of violent dispute and controversy. The really educated non-Catholic man has

long turned his back upon the whole thing, while those who have saved their belief in the Divine Christ out of the universal shipwreck are returning to the Roman obedience. All the slanders and the incessant abuse levelled against the Church have failed to restrain them, simply because truth is greater than man, and God is stronger than man. The Protestant Missionary societies are clamouring for support, and the Great Establishment itself is languishing for want of suitable men.

In Germany a more distressing picture still meets the eye. The very foundations are out of course. The most fundamental doctrines of the Reformation are ignored and forgotten. The Bible itself, for the possession and free use of which all the fuss was made, is scorned and despised and torn to pieces, and the very existence of God, and certainly the divinity of Christ, are doubted, and, in many instances, openly denied. In the kingdom of Saxony, one of the most Protestant portions of Protestant Germany, two and a half per cent. only of the entire population still attend church. The "divine" work of the supposed deliverer and reformer is almost complete, and true hearts are once more asking themselves the question: Where is truth? Who will show us any good? What must we do to be saved? Still the wretched farce goes on, the miserable fiasco is defended; every nerve is strained to hide away the truth of the matter, and to justify

what can never be justified. To successfully tone down and obliterate the consequences of a great sin, it is unhappily necessary to commit more sin, or to boldly call the thing by some kind of attractive and plausible name.

It is very difficult to understand all this, and yet one begins to see light when one begins to understand the human heart, its ungovernable pride, its innate tendency to mystify itself and to resist truth.

And here, in the midst of all this din and confusion, this mental suffering and pain and despair, the quiet work of the true Church is going on; the lamp continues to indicate the Divine Presence, and, wonderful thought! Christ remains with us. Oh! if the English people but knew the beauty of the Catholic Church, the consoling nature of her creed and ordinances; if they but knew how she is misrepresented and her doctrine distorted; if they could but shake themselves free from that false liberty which outrages the most innate and fundamental and indestructible laws of our nature!

We are told that the conclusions of reason and of science are against the truth of this wonderful doctrine of the Catholic Church; that the instructed modern intellect rebels against it. But what have reason and human knowledge to do with the matter, what *can* they have to do with it? In what sense can science pronounce upon a subject which, in its

very nature, is above and beyond the sphere of human science? Is it not a fundamental law of all Christian teaching, that the world, by its wisdom, cannot know God; that it is by the exercise of a higher faculty, of the spiritual sense, that the sphere of the Divine can alone be reached by man, and that "the faith of a Christian is not to stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God"? How can Divine truth ever become dependent upon the ascertainments of science and the postulates of reason? How long would it have endured had it by any chance been established upon so frail and variable and unstable a foundation? How could it have been brought within the reach of the poor, the unlettered, the unscientific, of mankind?

For my own part, I must confess to a feeling of intense distrust towards any form of religious thought which claims to be pre-eminently in accord with human reason, and which imports the latest dicta of science into the construction of its particular creed. The very idea suggests the man-made article, the thing invented by or accommodated to the human intellect, and the child of a particular age or form of human philosophy. The very notion surely of a Divine disclosure must also include the notion of mystery, of something but partially and imperfectly apprehended; it must reckon with the imperfect and limited and inadequate powers of our human nature. How can the finite mind of man be supposed to fully apprehend what emanates

from the infinite mind of God? And in what sense can human science be said to speak authoritatively upon such a subject as the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist? What does it really know about matter and substance, and spiritual forces and energies—in what manner the sphere of the Divine can best and most effectually operate upon the sphere of the human? Who can presume to say that in that little spot on our altars the Divine Man cannot be as truly and really and substantially present as He was when He moved upon the earth, and that He cannot there as effectually quicken and feed and stimulate the human soul? Has the world forgotten that thousands upon thousands of the holiest and most enlightened and cultivated of men and women in all ages have believed the doctrine with their whole hearts, that thousands more of every race and nation thoroughly believe it to-day? What can human reason have to do with such a matter; in what sense can it be considered capable of adjudicating upon it? Is it not at best a process of inferring from the known to the unknown? Are we not wholly outside the very domain of human science—in a sphere where Divine authority and supernatural faith alone can be our guide? In this sphere surely the poorest and humblest and most uninstructed of men, provided he have faith, and consequently spiritual insight, may be the truest of philosophers; and the wise man of science, without faith, and consequently without spiritual insight, the

greatest and most deluded of fools? How aptly did our Lord sum up the entire situation in those remarkable words: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: but even so, Father, for thus it seemed good in thy sight."

Thus it has been, and ever will be, in the spiritual history of the world. The unilluminated intellect, failing to find God by its limited and imperfect methods, and rebelling against the method devised and revealed by God, will seek for Him in vain, and will finally deny Him. The simple but divinely enlightened Catholic will know by intuition where He is to be found. He will go on kneeling in humble faith before the tabernacle, unable fully to understand, but obeying the dictates of his heart, the higher and true voice speaking in his soul. He will there gather true strength and consolation for the conflict of life, communing with the "God made Man," Whom his mortal eye cannot see, but Whom his spiritual sense assures Him to be there.

A Catholic Church in which the Blessed Sacrament is present is, in the truest sense, the sphere of the Divine, and, in a sense, its only sphere. It is thence that the mystic life-giving force radiates and envelops and permeates man, and that he is made to realise his immortality—the awful and constant significance and solemnity of life. Who has not been conscious of the spell which falls upon the

heart, and sometimes the unbelieving heart too, within the atmosphere of a Catholic Church, and before the awful presence on a Catholic altar? Catholics know it well; many an earnest Protestant has experienced it. Any person, not wholly callous and indifferent, may test its reality. There are some exceptionally sensitive persons whose sharpened faculties will discover the Blessed Sacrament immediately they enter a Catholic Church, even though they may be unable to discern the lamp indicating Its presence.

For us, therefore, it is to kneel on quietly and confidently, in the full assurance that ours is a wisdom which is not according to this world, ours a knowledge and a science of which God Himself and God alone is the author and the exponent. And when the modern intellect assails our position, and tells us that the doctrine of the revealed and present and immanent God is contrary to reason and out of harmony with scientific thinking, let us answer boldly in the words of a great French thinker and statesman:* "Catholicism may hinder thought, it may be true, but it can only hinder it in those who were not made for *accurate* thinking."

* M. Thiers.

16*th December* 189—.

Your letter just received has given me very sincere pleasure. Not only are you not offended at what I have so far written to you, but you are asking for a further exposition of Catholic teaching from my own particular point of view. Of course I am taking this as a most hopeful and promising sign, and am concluding that my previous letters have left a distinct and abiding impression upon your mind. Your remark, that "the reasonableness of our position is strongly attracting you," is the best possible reward I can receive for the labour which I am expending over these letters—if, indeed, it can be called a labour. What greater joy can there be for a Catholic than the consciousness that the truth which he loves so well, and which he regards as the one thing worth possessing in this restless, changeful world—the pearl of great price, by the side of which all other treasures are of very little use—is beginning to prevail over another soul? We Catholics are thoroughly convinced that if the English people only knew the beauty and consistency and reasonableness of the doctrines of the Church, they would embrace them with all their

hearts. But brought up as they have been in the atmosphere of controversy, and nourished on distortions and caricatures of Catholic teaching, and on mutilated and, as we believe, invalid sacraments, how can we expect them to approach the subject in a fair spirit, and with that freedom from mental bias which can alone secure a fair hearing and a fair judgment? Their eyes and minds are "holden," and it is God alone who can speak the work that shall set the soul free. That word, as you know well, is being spoken to many a searching, longing heart just now, and the burning desire is growing up in me that it may, ere long, be spoken in yours.

If I am now, at your own request, writing openly and plainly, you will acquit me of any attempt on my part to use unfair means, or to draw unfair conclusions. We are constantly accused of doing this, as you know full well, and there are still thousands of intelligent persons in England who are thoroughly convinced that we are prepared to employ any and every means, so long as we ultimately succeed in catching an unwary fish in the Catholic net. These good people are strangely forgetful of the circumstance that, in order to be able to make that open confession of faith without which no convert can be received into the Church, it is absolutely necessary for him to be thoroughly convinced of the truth of that faith, and that it is God alone who can bring about such a conviction in the heart. Those supposed tricks and

subtleties of Catholics, even if they were exercised, could at best but *incline* the mind towards an examination of the Catholic position, and perhaps remove certain intellectual hindrances and stumbling-blocks. But how could they lead it into the Sanctuary itself, and *keep it there*, unless there be a better and firmer and more permanent foundation? It ought to be clear to the most superficial thinker, that a person received into the Church in consequence of some emotional impression or on insufficient grounds, is almost bound to leave it again upon fuller and more mature consideration, and is thus certain to do infinitely more harm than good to the Catholic cause in the end.

I cannot for a moment suppose that you, the child of the Anglican Church, are entirely free from that vague suspicion which this popular belief has created in the mind of the English people, however indignantly you might be disposed to repudiate the very notion as contrary to your personal knowledge of the ways of Catholics. I am therefore hoping most earnestly that, in the course of this correspondence, you will carefully scrutinise each separate definite statement which I make, well weighing and considering the truth which it is intended to convey; and that you will allow no passing fancy, or perhaps disgust with Protestant confusion and inconsistencies, to weigh with your mind.

After your last letter I am more than ever deter-

mined to gain you for the Catholic Church, but to gain you by the conquering power of truth and by the grace of God, not by any kind of subtle argument or specious pleading. Remember those striking words: "The Church has nothing to fear from earnest enquiry. What she does fear is to be condemned unheard." You evidently are determined to hear her, and I am convinced that, having heard her, you will not condemn. Yours is a logical mind which, forgive the flattery and the plain-speaking, is too good to waste itself on Anglicanism or on any other -ism. It is not doctrines or views or interpretations that the awakened human mind wants, but truth itself, revealed truth, and that is to be found in the Catholic Church alone.

You ask me in your letter, on what lines I defend the institution of the *Sacrament of Penance*—auricular confession and absolution. Confession to a priest, you say, is intensely distasteful to you. This, too, is a very big subject, and, from the many thoughts which come crowding into one's mind, it is not easy to make a suitable selection. I conclude, of course, that you want me to put it from my point of view, not from that of the theologian, which, indeed, you can ascertain from any work on dogmatic theology. I wish I were more learned, and could put what I have to say in more forcible and convincing language. But you will be patient with me, and bear with

the somewhat fragmentary and disjointed form of my statements.

The whole thing, of course, turns round the subject of sin. If you start with a misconception on that subject, you will be at sea right through, and you will never understand the Catholic doctrine. Modern thought, as you know, has been very active in this direction, and has tended to a grave modification of the entire Christian conception. Science, too, has had its say, and the general result is, that the word "sin," so far from standing for a certain state of moral life and thought offensive to God and in opposition to His declared will, and as such carrying with it grave responsibility, is regarded to-day as a convenient but somewhat antiquated term for describing a certain pathological condition through which the human race has passed in the process of its upward development. This view, as might have been supposed, is meeting with increasing acceptance, simply because there is a plausible and scientific sound about it, and because it has the merit of solving a good many difficulties. But, in my own opinion, it is very largely to this changed conception of the nature and effect of sin that the increasing modern departure from orthodox Christianity is to be attributed. The mental process which brings it about is, of course, a necessary and inevitable one, and, in many minds, it takes place quite unconsciously—simply in consequence of the influences of the

ordinary mental and moral environments. But the fact remains that it is not upon this, but upon the opposite view, upon the orthodox and traditional notion of sin, that the historic Christian system and the scheme of Redemption builds itself up. When this foundation truth, therefore, is removed or shaken, the whole Christian system tumbles to pieces, and the Gospel to which those who survive the moral shipwreck continue to cling, becomes "another Gospel"—it ceases to be the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now, looking away entirely from the distinctly theological aspect of the matter, and speaking purely as a layman who is in the habit of examining the various points of his creed in the light of modern ideas, I would, in the first place, point to one potent fact which meets us in all the varied experiences of life, and from which no human science or philosophy has enabled us to escape. That fact is, the *consciousness* of sin. This consciousness, which is strangely ignored by modern science, is, believe me, very deeply impressed upon human nature, and it is a very striking and interesting circumstance that, while the modern mind is only too ready to adopt the popular explanation of things, and to take no very serious view of the matter, that same modern mind cannot succeed in also banishing the psychological phenomena attending it from the moral life of mankind.

I cannot for one moment suppose that you will dis-

pute the existence of this consciousness itself. You may remember some of our talks on this subject in the years gone by. Then, at any rate, you admitted that most thoughtful men in all probability experience it. You have seen enough of life to know that it is apt to express itself in a variety of ways, according to particular circumstances and environments. In some persons it displays itself in an entire and most unnatural absorption of the mind in the affairs of the present life. In others, in that intense restlessness of heart and mind which finds its one and only satisfaction in the discovery of new means of stimulating the senses, and of causing forgetfulness of the higher and more serious problems of human existence. In others, again, it is exhibited in that weariness of life, that *tædium vitæ* which so frequently terminates in complete moral shipwreck, and even suicide. Those passing through these various psychological experiences need not, of course, be themselves aware to what cause they are to attribute them, and how they originate. That they have their ultimate source in that consciousness of sin which throws the moral nature out of gear, and produces internal discord and discontent, so that there is an intense dislike of being alone with the true self (the subliminal self, as Mr Myers calls it), even for half an hour, I am thoroughly satisfied. My own impression is, that it is here that the true source of the increasing pessimism of life is to be

sought. This sense of sin, and consequently of estrangement from that life of God to which the soul was originally attuned and without which it is bound to be restless, is so strong in some persons, that, unless they discover the only true remedy for it, they will lose all interest in life, and, in a very real and definite sense, commit moral suicide.

You may smile at what must, at first sight, appear to you a very eccentric and startling idea, but I am thoroughly convinced that those wretched and weary-looking people who are supposed to be suffering from "nerves," who fly from one place to another for change of air and change of scene, are, as a matter of fact, morally and not physically ill, and that what they want is not bodily but spiritual treatment. Their souls are thoroughly diseased and out of sorts, and they will never recover until they have discovered what is really amiss with them, and thus, also, the only effective remedy for their ailment. My impression is, that confession and absolution would cure many of them. Now, I want you to think this over carefully, to observe and to examine for yourself, and then to ask yourself whether you do not think that I am right.

Again, no amount of modern learning will help us to get rid of the fact that this intense consciousness of sin, this moral maladjustment so powerfully affecting the soul's life, is very universal. It is expressed in every form of ancient and modern

religion, in every attempt made by human nature to approach God, and to hold communion with Him. How wonderfully is this illustrated in the books of the Old Testament, in Psalms such as the *Miserere* and the 89th Psalm (Prayer of Moses), or in such early compositions as the book of Job. Consider for one moment what a wonderful thing it is that the Church can to-day employ the very words of spiritual men uttered thousands of years ago, and that the moral experiences expressed in these words accurately and effectively express our own moral experience to-day.

All this leads me to the most natural and reasonable conclusion that, however attractive and scientific the modern notions of these things may seem, the facts of life are constantly disproving their accuracy, and the unmistakable voice of nature is repudiating them.

And this leads to the further conclusion that the view of the Old and New Testaments, confirmed as it is by the universal voice of mankind, is, after all, the true one, and that it is upon it alone that a true philosophy of life and a true religion can be built up. Great difficulties, of course, remain, but I am confident that they are not half as great as those which attend the more attractive and so largely accepted modern view of the matter.

One, and perhaps the greatest, of these difficulties, lies in the limitations of our human nature, in the

circumstance that, in our present state, we can have no adequate conception of the way in which sin affects the soul's life and shapes its destiny. We only see it in its outward manifestations, in its general effect upon human character. We cannot trace its more subtle inward operations. In all probability, pride—that most terrible of all human vices—lies at the root of the whole matter. We have, in the experience of life, some intimation of what pride can do in the human soul. It is the source and root of almost every other evil and vice. And, as somebody has rightly said, "The kingdom of God is closed against human pride."

"Man," says a modern mystic writer, "is under the influence of matter which throws a veil over his spiritual perceptions, and fascinates him with false seemings. When this veil drops away from him, his mind is suddenly flooded with light, and he is sobered from the intoxication."

Cardinal Manning says, in his book on *Sin and its Consequences*, which you would do well to study carefully: "Sin stupefies the intellect and the heart: it draws a veil and a mist over the brightness of the intelligence, and it darkens the light of the conscience. Sin is like hemlock: it deadens the sense, so that the spiritual eye begins to close, and the spiritual ear becomes heavy, and the heart grows drowsy."

And again: "The malice of sin consists in this:

that an intelligent creature, having a power of will, deliberately and consciously opposes the will of its Maker. The malice of sin is essentially internal to the soul. The external action, whereby the sinner perpetrates his sin, adds, indeed, an accidental malice and an accidental increase of wickedness; but the essence, the life of the malice, consists in the state of the soul itself."

Still, considering our intensely material composition and our immense self-conceit, it is conceivable that all our notions of the real character of sin and its effect are inadequate, and that we only gain a glimpse of the real state of things in those moments of spiritual discernment and insight which are incidental to a life of high spiritual effort and self-abandonment. It is more than probable that, could we see ourselves for a single moment as God sees us, all our difficulties would vanish, and we would understand all.

The fact remains that, while the truer inward experiences of the best of men are contrary to the prevailing liberal views, they are wholly in accord with those of the Old Testament, and with those so forcibly expressed by Christ Himself. And you will admit that the terms in which sin is spoken of in the New Testament admit of no compromise, and certainly lead us to infer that our conceptions of it are most imperfect and inadequate. Christ declared sin to be the death of the soul. He pronounced no sacrifice

to be too great in the effort to escape it and to overcome it. "It was better," He said, "that we should pluck out our eyes than that they should lead us into sin." The Apostles echoed these thoughts. The early martyrs experienced their truth, and had an intense conviction of the reality of Hell and its punishments. And whenever men have grown in spiritual understanding and discernment, and have, by prayer and subjugation of their lower self, cultivated the higher self, they have also changed their view as to the real nature and consequence of sin. Is it, then, unreasonable to conclude that such a changed view is, after all, the correct one?

"Mortal sin," that is, sin committed knowingly, deliberately, and in some grave matter, says another thoughtful writer, "is spiritual suicide, more terrible by far than that destroying the natural life, since it destroys the Divine and supernatural life, which is worth infinitely more than the soul itself—to say nothing of the body."

Now, if you admit the correctness of this method of reasoning, and start with this truly orthodox but nevertheless genuinely scientific conception of the character and effect of sin, we shall, of course, be in complete agreement as to the meaning of the Incarnation and the process of Redemption, and there is no need to enter into a consideration of this other fundamental truth standing in such intimate relation to it. And you would further admit the need of

sincere repentance and confession; but you would maintain that this confession should be to God and not to man—the latter notion being, as you say, unwelcome and distasteful to you, and contrary to your feelings and instincts as a man and an Englishman.

But are you not here, too, labouring under that fatal prejudice and misconception of things which is so apt to estrange intelligent minds from the Catholic Faith? Are you not taking a very one-sided and short-sighted view of the matter? Have you ever carefully and patiently examined the doctrine of Penance as it is set forth by our Catholic theologians:—the arguments to be drawn from Scripture, the grounds on which she regards Penance as a true and real Sacrament of the Gospel, and on which she maintains and defends the practice of particular confession to a priest? Have you ever looked at the matter from what I may term God's point of view? Were the Church a mere human institution, and were her theology the outcome of human ideas and feelings, it is, of course, very probable that the Confessional would never have been instituted, seeing how intensely repugnant the whole thing is to the natural man. But, being what she is, and possessing the knowledge, the truer and deeper knowledge of human nature which she does, the institution of the Confessional became an inevitable necessity, seeing that it is by its means alone that the full benefits

of the Divine work of redemption could be applied to the human soul, and that man could be saved from himself.

And the entire moral history of the world surely has justified the Church's mode of action. Is it not, for instance, a very remarkable thing that, even though the practice of Confession has suffered the most terrible obloquy at the hands of unreasoning men, and has for hundreds of years been ceaselessly condemned by the entire Protestant world, thousands and tens of thousands of refined and cultivated men and women of every race and country habitually and systematically resort to it; and thousands more, under no kind of external moral or doctrinal obligation, adopt the practice of their own free will and are not repelled by it. This surely should make an intelligent man think, and should make him pause and consider. Is it not just possible that the Church may know better than man himself what is really good and beneficial for him, and that, having Divine discernment, she is better able to rightly interpret those strange contradictions of our nature, which, while they make us in one sense shrink from confession, make us in another desire it and yearn for it.

And how can our personal likes and dislikes determine the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the doctrine? Does an honourable man shrink from the personal and deliberate admission of an error of judgment, or of an act of injustice or malice towards

another man, because the process of humiliation incidental to it is distasteful and repugnant to him? Does that feeling determine the rightness or the wrongness of the action? Does he gain or lose in the esteem of others if he overcome the lower impulse and obey the higher? Does a sick man shrink from a full description of the origin and symptoms of his sickness, because the intimation of the cause and circumstances originating it happens to be exceedingly painful to his feelings, and distasteful to him as a man and an Englishman? I am still, as you see, regarding the whole matter from my own particular point of view, and am not even approaching the sphere of the theologian. I am not saying a word about the necessity of a correct description of cause and symptoms in order to the securing of a correct diagnosis; of the priest in his capacity of the good physician, of the discerner of motives and impulses and promptings to sin, in his character as the true healer and physician of the soul. I am still treating the matter from the purely subjective and human point of view.

Of course, the detailed confession of sin is extremely irksome and unpleasant to us, and of necessity must always be so. We are by nature proud, and self-willed, and conceited, and hate to own up when we have done wrong; but it is just *because* of this disposition of our nature that the practice was instituted, and it is its very institution that should pro-

claim to us its Divine character. It is the surrender of the practice on the part of Protestantism which has undermined the entire historic notion of sin and redemption, producing those absurd modern views which estrange so many thousand hearts from the forgiveness of Christ, and which are ultimately responsible for those vague and indefinite religious ideas which characterise this present age. The Protestant teaching is prompted by the reasserted supremacy of the natural man; it is based upon *his* conception of sin and its consequences, and it is from him that that notion of the supposed nobler doctrine of confession to God *only* really proceeds. With the vast majority of mankind, confession to God *only* is, as a matter of fact, no confession at all, or is, at most, some kind of general assent, vague and indefinite in character, ineffective in its operation, and leaving no particular and abiding mark or impression upon the soul. There is, believe me, no escaping these facts; and the very bitterness of Protestants at this present time is evidence that they are fully conscious that we are having the best of the argument, and that all the experiences of human life are proving the untenableness of their system. Our practice of confession gives tone and clearness and definiteness to the spiritual life, it enables a man to advance by definite acts of religion, and thus to get to know himself; the Protestant practice is productive of vagueness and indefiniteness, and of that general

laxity in matters of the moral life which, with really thoughtful persons, ends in indifference and unbelief.

Here is what I wrote to a friend on this subject some years ago: "It is uncertainty as to the state of the soul which is the real cause of that restlessness and unhappiness which is so characteristic of our modern life. It is the shrinking from anything approaching definite acts of religion which leads to religious indifference and to the estrangement of the soul from God. Most persons do not oppose the Catholic Doctrine of Confession because they really think it unscriptural or immoral, but because it brings them face to face with that great fact of their moral life of which they are vaguely conscious, but which they are for ever seeking to efface and to evade. Like the sick man shrinks from the close examination of the physician or from the application of the surgeon's knife, so the modern Protestant shrinks from the very thought of thorough self-examination and confession. And yet experience proves again and again that, without these, there can be no true and enduring moral health, no definite progress in the spiritual life, no true self-regulation and self-knowledge.

It is the man whose life and affairs are in confusion and disorder, and who, vaguely conscious that something is seriously wrong, shrinks from examination and arrangement, that is the really unhappy and restless man. It is the dread of the

hidden danger, of the approach of a crisis, a day of reckoning, that causes his uneasiness. It is the man who *habitually* balances his accounts and sets his house in order, who does not shrink from facing a difficult position and from examining into a critical and complicated state of affairs, that is the calm and quiet and confident man. It is the very examination itself, and a knowledge of the worst that is likely to happen, that has a bracing moral effect upon his character, and that steadies and fortifies his soul.

The same holds good in matters of the spiritual life. Generalising in religion, especially with regard to sin and confession, is the death of all spiritual effort. There is no getting rid of our sins, and no overcoming them, until we face and recognise them, and then formulate and declare and confess them; until our dealing with them becomes a real and very definite transaction.

And in the same way the fact of forgiveness must enter as a definite reality into our life. It must come to us as the result of our obedience to known laws and conditions, and as a reward of our submission and humiliation. It is only thus, by such definite acts, that our spiritual life can advance and progress, and that our relation to God can assume a true and distinct form.

But the subject is an inexhaustible one, and I must not go on. You will, of course, be studying the

theology of the Catholic Doctrine. There is none, I think, which so thoroughly illustrates the truth of what I stated in an earlier letter:—that all Catholic doctrine has its source in the necessities of our human nature. There are expressions of a vague sense of this necessity even in the writings of some of the classic thinkers of antiquity, and so far as auricular confession is concerned, you will find that the leaders of the Reformation desired to maintain it, and that even an infidel like Voltaire defended it. I am again adding some notes, fragmentary I fear, and very disconnected, but the best I have to give on the subject. Their purpose is to open up new lines of thought. You will easily find more material.

Plato says: "If anybody commit a wrong, he should go voluntarily to expiate it: to the judge as well as to the physician, so that the rooted disease of injustice may not weight the soul and render it incurable. . . . He must, above all things, accuse himself; he must not conceal his misdeed, but take it to the light of day, so that he may expiate it and attain to recovery from it."

Socrates wrote: "If a man has done an injustice, he should accuse himself of it, he should bring it to light so that he may be punished and cured. . . . Else," he adds, "the disease of the soul will become an ulcer."

"What would be the affliction of the Christian," is Luther's testimony, "if there were no auricular confession."—Jena, vol. i., p. 512.

Calvin wrote: "By means of private confession, pardon is obtained from those to whom Christ has said: 'All that you shall have loosed and remitted on earth shall be loosed and remitted in Heaven.'"—*Third Book of Instructions,* iv.

Voltaire, the French infidel, admitted that: "Confession is an excellent thing; it is a curb to the greater crimes. . . ." Again: "The wise men of antiquity were sensible of its importance, and if they were unable to make it an obligation on all, they at least established the practice for those who aspired to a blameless life."

Leibnitz, the Protestant philosopher, declares that: "No one can deny that the whole institution of confession is worthy of the Divine wisdom. Assuredly there is nothing more beautiful nor more worthy of admiration in the Christian religion. Even the very Chinese and Japanese have been struck by it. In truth, the duty of confession keeps many men from falling into sin, especially those who are not quite case-hardened, while at the same time it offers immense consolations to those who have fallen. I consider a pious, wise, and prudent con-

fessor as the grandest agent which God has in the work of saving souls; for his counsels serve to regulate our affections, to make us know our faults, to make us avoid the occasion of sin, to make us restore what we have unjustly taken away; to make us repair the scandal we have given, to remove doubts, to encourage us when we are sad at heart—in short, to cure, or at least to soothe, all the ills to which the soul is subject. If it would be hard to find in this world anything more precious than a faithful friend, how much more must it be so when that friend is bound to you by the inviolable bond of a Divine Sacrament, and bound by it to be faithful to you, and to help you to the best of his power."

Even the great Napoleon has left behind him some record of his appreciation of confession. In a conversation with one of his friends, he expressed himself in the following terms: "Confession, as a Divine institution, is only too necessary; when we make ourselves known to another, then it is that we learn to know ourselves; it is a secure guide of our conscience, and gives us a thorough knowledge of ourselves. It establishes us in good, and unites us with God; and there is no denying that. But confession is a business of a confidential and a delicate nature; and in consequence each man has a right to select his own confessor."

"Every sensitive man experiences a feeling of bodily discomfort when he has put himself within the sphere of evil, and he is fully conscious that from it a departure from evil alone can free him. He becomes, in the same way, conscious of the spirit of truth, whether he meet with it in some other person, or in some other house, or people, or perhaps speaking to him from some book."

"Forgiveness of sin is not merely a kind of amnesty: but justice and judgment are a necessary part of it. These we have only strength to bear when the joy of forgiveness is experienced."

"In the case of a soul dominated by pride, the humiliation incidental to confession to man is a psychological necessity, and the pardon pronounced by a God-appointed person affords a consolation which no mere process of thought can ever produce."

"The real power of sin lies in its secrecy: Confession alone is the first actual departure from it."

"It is a simple fact, that a man cannot be childlike unless he has practised himself in submitting to another man, and in conforming himself to an external ordinance which he has not established for himself. We all know that spiritual acts, such as worship, oblation, petition, and contrition, are apt to

cease, to ebb like the tide of the sea, from the sand of our conscious nature, and in the business and absorption of life. A command of authority, a determined time, a definite exercise—all the manifestations of external ministry—are so many calls and warnings, so much exhortation and stimulus, to the things we forget most easily."

The Anglican Professor Knight, LL.D., in his *Christian Ethics* (1873), testifies to the moral influence of the Confessional, not only in Ireland, but in all Europe, and even in the entire world. The distinguished scholar says: "The moral debt which the world owes to the Roman Catholic Church is immeasurable; but perhaps none of its ceremonies have done more for the perservation and elevation of European morals than the practice so much misunderstood, so often misrepresented, of confession. Many Protestants imagine that the Catholic is taught to confess only to the priest, and that he is by the priest absolved. On the contrary, he makes confession only to the Unseen and the Infinite, the priest being merely the channel through which confession is made, and who has himself to confess to others, to the Unseen; and the custom which, with all its humiliation, Catholics come to feel so helpful, that of periodically practising confession, has unquestionably been an aid to the higher life during the centuries in which it has been practised. The

turning of the eye inwards, scrutinising the springs and motives of conduct, and after the discovery that one has erred this way or that, confessing it all, not to any human medium, but to the Infinite, through the guarded and gracious channel of the finite, and after confession—keeping nothing back and genuinely penitent for all—receiving absolution in the sense of finding the burden lifted from the back and a new step forward made possible, with the sense of freedom gained and life renewed, not by forgetfulness of the past, but by rising on stepping-stones of the dead self to higher things—all that has been an immeasurable blessing to the world. . . . The gain of confession to penitents is four-fold: 1. That of self-knowledge. 2. The demand of thorough sincerity, or absolute truthfulness, in unfolding to the eye of the Infinite what has transpired in the depths of the personal life. 3. Reparation for wrongs done to others is made easier and more natural. None who make a practice of genuine confession can continue to harbour grudges or cherish hatreds against their fellowmen. 4. A fresh start is given to the moral life, a new beginning is made, and an impulse forward received, aspiration quickened, upward movements made easier, and the ideals of life developed in every direction under happier auspices than before. To have familiarised the masses with the duty of absolute sincerity in this matter of confession, to have educated the organic conscience of the Church,

to feel that reserve on one hand and exaggeration on the other is a sacrilegious act, to have taught that in the presence of the Unseen, the Divine, and the Infinite, all disguises and pretences, as well as trifles, must be laid aside, and after unreserved explicitness a new departure in the higher life may be taken, is surely service of the highest value to humanity at large. . . . And if the aim of confession has been to give self-knowledge, release, and rest, to give hope and new impulse in well-doing, as well as a glimpse of larger ideals of conduct, the result of the practice, tested by historical fact, has surely coincided with those aims. The practice has tended to raise the moral life of Europe. It is needless for a Protestant to quote statistics. The point to be noted is the influence of confession as a moral safeguard, and I think that all open-minded historians will admit that it has tended in an upward direction."

"The human heart," writes Prince Max of Saxony, "this rebellious and yet despondent thing, feels the heavy burden of sin. It longs to be freed from it, and it has a vague sense, too, that confession is the first step towards reconciliation, and yet it cannot get itself to take this step. It struggles and hesitates, and remains undecided. There comes the Church, therefore, with firm and unhesitating step, and, stretching out her safely guiding hand, leads it, by the Sacrament of Penance, to fresh effort and to a new life in God. De

Maistre, a thoughtful Frenchman, has said: 'There is no Catholic dogma which has not its root in the inmost depths of human nature, and consequently in a universal conviction, distorted here and there, it is true, but nevertheless, in its origin, common to the people of every age and time.' This applies pre-eminently to the doctrine of Confession. Ineradicable is the consciousness in man that, between guilt and expiation, between sin and forgiveness, between uneasiness of conscience and peace of conscience, there is a gulf which Confession alone can bridge. Full confession is the vessel which carries the human heart from the torturing cliffs of guilt to the peaceful shore of cleansing and of reconciliation with God and self. This is a truth which was not brought into the world by Christianity, but which was known, in its outlines, by truth-loving and truth-seeking men everywhere. . . .

"Who can measure the consolation and ease of conscience which a sincere and heartfelt confession has brought to millions of souls? Who can count the young of both sexes who, by this means, have been drawn away from evil associations and from the road to ruin—who have, by the frequent use of the Sacrament of Penance, been gradually freed from the fetters of some sinful habit? How many sins have not been prevented by the advice and direction of an experienced and circumspect confessor? How much money and property, unjustly appropriated, has not thus found its way back to its rightful owner? All this

would have been impossible but for the practice of confession, for the determination to overcome the false sense of pride and shame, and to confess the sin fully and penitently. Who is there to help those young men of our time who are secretly given to habits that are bound to ruin them in body and in soul? Who is there that can, like the confessor, sever men from evil associations, and compel them, by the withholding of absolution, to avoid the occasions of sin.

"And who can count those thousands who, by confession, have been kept from grievous and mortal sin, who have retained their baptismal innocence, and who have cultivated a tenderness of conscience which, without a diligent use of the Sacrament, would have been wholly impossible. How many have, in the Confessional, found guidance and counsel in important and difficult matters of life, and have, by the aid of a good director, been led onwards on the path of perfection and holiness? Millions of dying men have thus, after a life of sin and shame, been reconciled to God, and have, by a sincere confession, opened for themselves the very gates of Paradise! How many many souls, in short, have, through confession, been restored to God and snatched from Hell, and how very very few have by it come to grief, and even then not through the proper use of the Sacrament, but through the abuse or misuse of it? God knows the number of all these, and the Day of Judgment

alone will reveal what blessings the Confessional has wrought. Confession is a truly Divine institution, an institution so marvellous and exalted that only God Himself could have invented it. But all this the adversary of man knows full well; hence his determined and never-ceasing effort to depreciate it, and to destroy confidence in it in the hearts of men! It is for this reason that he is incessantly urging men on to talk and write against it, and he likes it best of all when the attack is made on the grounds of moral indignation. It is a fact that all learned, pious, and holy men have ever been full of admiration for the Sacrament of Penance, and that all bad Catholics, Infidels, and Heretics have abused it."

5th January 189—.

I am not surprised to find that your examination of the Catholic doctrine of Penance has brought you face to face with the question of *Anglican Orders.* That question is bound to present itself immediately the Catholic position is clearly understood. But I do not think that, having got so far, you will find it necessary to spend much time or thought over it.

A very great deal has been written on the subject in recent years, as you know; but, for a man of your views and position in the Anglican Church, the better portion of the arguments are really beside the point. I do not suppose that you have ever considered yourself a priest in the historic and Roman sense. That absurd claim has never been made by the great body of really sensible Anglican clergymen, who know full well that both history and ordinary common sense are against such a claim. A hundred years ago no sane man in England would have entertained the idea. It arose, as you know, in the minds of a small portion of the Ritualistic clergy, who, disgusted with their own

position, fell in love with the Catholic ideal, and who thought that, by a judicious arrangement of things, history might be construed into an interpretation favourable to an Anglican realisation of that ideal. You will remember the striking words from an article by a thoughtful Anglican clergyman which I quoted at the end of my letter of the 5th of November. What he says there also applies in a most emphatic way to the question of *Orders*. Do not fog your mind and waste your time over a mass of theological and controversial literature. It is clearly a question of history and of ordinary good sense. All the rest is really mental gymnastics. The man who has the most elementary knowledge of the former, and a very moderate measure of the latter, and who does not start with the determination to prove the High Church theory true, cannot possibly believe in the validity (in the Catholic sense) of Anglican Orders. For you, the Pope's recent pronouncement on the subject will be more than sufficient. It was issued, as you know, after careful consideration and re-examination of the subject on the part of the best Catholic theologians of various countries, not because there was any grave doubt on the subject, but because some extreme High Anglicans so desired it.

To sensible men who know something of the history of the Anglican Church under Henry and Elizabeth, there is of course something deeply instructive in

the very desire itself, seeing how thoroughly it implies the acknowledged unique position of Rome, and the consciousness that Rome alone can pronounce on the subject. If the Protestant Bishops, who have begotten these Anglican priests by the laying on of their Protestant hands, could have heard of this project, they would certainly have turned in their graves with indignation and amazement. But it is thus that the cause of God and of His Church is apt to be vindicated in the history of human thought. It is thus that the historic and dogmatic consistency of the Catholic Church has once more secured the respect and admiration of the world.

In the sixteenth century, Rome might have retained the allegiance of Catholic England had she been unfaithful to her trust and consented to sanction the debaucheries of her King; in the nineteenth century another great opportunity was given her of regaining England for the true faith. But here too, in order to attain a momentary victory, she would have had to be disloyal to her tradition, and would have had to make a hateful and abominable compromise—a course of action which every instructed Catholic knew to be wholly out of the question. For you must know that, by her very practice of reordaining converted Anglican clergymen aspiring to the priesthood, Rome pronounced the invalidity of Anglican Orders ages before the High Church Party existed, and before the Papal Commission was summoned. The Anglican

clergyman, therefore, may be a priest from some point of view best known to himself: he never was, and never can be, a priest from the Catholic and Roman and historic point of view.

Acceptance of this position involves, of course, as you rightly say, a very grave consideration. It raises the question of the validity of the Anglican sacraments—in fact, of the reality of the entire sacramental life of the Anglican Church. In the determination of this question a thousand influences, often, of course, quite unperceived by the mind searching for the right solution, naturally play their part. An Englishman loves his national Church, interpenetrating, as it does, his entire social and educational life, and connected as it is, with all his earliest religious impressions and associations, and the anti-Catholic bias of his mind is a very natural and inevitable thing. He is naturally anxious to seek a solution favourable to his Church. Newman, as you know, felt all this, and gave full and emphatic expression to it. It was he, however, who declared that the very best that could be said about Anglican Orders was that they were doubtful, and that in so serious a matter, and one involving such grave issues, a right-minded man may not be in doubt.

You ask me whether I think that the better portion of the High Anglican clergy are in good faith. That is a difficult and delicate question to ask, and I have

some diffidence in answering it. It is so very easy to say the wrong thing, and, with the best intention in the world, to break the law of charity and to say things that must in the end hurt and wound. I have the deepest sympathy with the Anglican clergy and their increasingly difficult position, and I make full allowance for all the influences of early education, of social and intellectual environment, and of that feeling of nationalism which is so strongly marked in the English character, and which is so closely identified with the Established Religion. But, if I am to be quite honest, I cannot say that I believe the better portion of the High Church clergy to be in good faith. There was a time when I did think so. But recent events: the fresh appeal to history, the re-examination of the old controversy between England and Rome, the admitted failure of the Protestant principle in maintaining a hold over the educated intellect and over the life of the masses, the steadily growing influence of Rome, must have brought conviction to all thoughtful minds that the Anglican position is at best exceedingly insecure, and that it is the duty of the appointed teachers of the people to reconsider that position, and to make sure that their ministry is a true and valid and a God-ordained one. That, having arrived at such conviction, and having fully and carefully examined, their verdict should be one favourable to themselves, I find it extremely difficult to believe. The facts of history

are too simple and too plain to be circumvented by controversial subtleties, and where the sacramental principle is at all admitted, the Catholic position seems to be an absolutely inevitable conclusion.

My own impression is, that it is the social and family aspect of the matter which presents the chief difficulty, and which, in so many instances, "holds" the mind, which makes so many shrink from even entering into any kind of re-examination of the question. There is a vague sense, I fancy, that such a re-examination may be fraught with serious consequences, and so it is shelved altogether. I have seen one letter from a married Anglican clergyman to a priest of my acquaintance, in which he asks whether an income of only fifty pounds a year could be secured to him, in the event of his joining the Catholic Church. The resignation of his incumbency, he said, would mean the loss of four hundred pounds a year to him, and would render him penniless. Still he felt that he *ought* to go. Another clergyman wrote that, although fully convinced of the untenableness of his position and the valid claims of Rome, he had five reasons for not joining the Church, and those five reasons were his five unprovided-for children.

I do not in the least mean to say that these cases indicate the existence of a very universal state of things, but they do indicate which way the wind is blowing, and, when you take into consideration

the numerous members of Anglican families, wives, daughters, and sons of clergymen, who, in consequence of the latter's advanced teaching, have joined the Church, the situation does assume a very serious aspect. The natural inference is, that they, being free to follow out their convictions to their logical conclusions, have readily arrived at them, while those who have set them working, but who are restrained by the material and social considerations of life, have found ways and means of evading them. And that inference is not an unfair or an ungenerous one; it is a *human* one, and does not imply that such clergymen are not deserving of our most tender sympathy and compassion. At any rate, you will admit that the thought of the two above-mentioned clergymen, whose names, of course, I have never heard, continuing to minister in the Anglican communion, in spite of their convictions, suggests many a sad and painful consideration.

I do most earnestly hope and pray that, whatever your ultimate position may be, you will not seek refuge in that absurd and utterly unhistoric Branch theory, which, I am confident, will never permanently satisfy your mind. It is infinitely better and more honourable to be an honest and thorough-going Protestant, embracing the Thirty-nine Articles and obeying one's Bishop. As such, you are at least sure of the respect of all loyal Catholics. I thoroughly agree with what Fr. Procter says on this subject, in his

very striking and interesting book, *The Catholic Creed.* I have not the book by me at present, but I read it some time ago and I copied out the following:—

"When they (the Anglican clergy) wear vestments, or swing censers, or form processions, or burn candles, or turn to the east and from the west, or mix water with the wine, or put up stations of the cross and images of the saints in their churches, or hold 'high celebrations,' and 'early communions,' even fasting, we can afford to smile at the imitation, and be amused at the unintentional flattery implied in the following out of what we do. But when it comes to deceiving the people in so grave a matter as affecting to forgive sin, for which they have neither power from God, nor authority nor approval from the Church to which they nominally belong, it is no longer a matter for merriment, but a serious scandal and a scandalous shame. 'If the blind lead the blind,' leader and led will 'fall into the pit.' Priests have to spend years of preparation for the sacred duty of confession. They are told that they are responsible to God for every absolution given or refused. They have to apply to themselves the warning words of the prophet, that if any soul is lost through their guidance: 'I will demand his blood at thy hands' (Ezec. iii. 18). And yet, here are men, without study, without preparation, without training, without warrant, attempting to guide souls to heaven, to solve difficulties, often-

times most difficult for the learned to remove, to take away impediments on the way, and, above all, to pardon sin. If a man were to pose as a doctor, without study or preparation or title; if another were to profess to practise as a lawyer, who knew nothing about law, and had passed no examination on the subject; or a third were to take charge of a vessel, without knowledge of the rules of navigation: all three would justly, and most justly, be fined or put into prison. Yet this is what many are doing spiritually in England to-day. But there is another scandal no less grave. A priest must be 'called,' and he must be 'ordained,' before he can take upon himself 'the ministry of reconciliation.' We may justly ask, and we may wait long for the reply: 'Who called any one in the Anglican Church to hear confession?' Who ordained them for that purpose? It is true that words are said in the ordination service which imply the giving of the power to forgive—words which, by a strange anomaly, have remained there from the days when confession prevailed in the Church in England, because then the Church in England was the Catholic Church. But if the bishop who says the words has no power to give what the words imply, the words are meaningless and vain. *Vox et præterea nihil.* For three hundred years what bishop of the Anglican establishment pretended to have the power; what bishop pretends to it this day? What bishop ever did,

what bishop ever does, what bishop in the Anglican Church could intend to, make an absolving priest? No intention, nothing given. The 'keys' were given to Peter and to Peter's line, to which line they do not even profess to belong. . . . They (the Anglican clergy) are acting without authority, serving without commission, ruling without jurisdiction or power."

You are probably right in what you say respecting the *Social status of the Catholic priesthood* in this country. It differs, in many respects, from that of the Anglican clergy, and that for many and obvious reasons. You could scarcely expect that a church still operating as a missionary body in a Protestant country, and under a hundred social disadvantages, the larger portion of whose adherents are found amongst the lower middle classes and the very poor, whose notions, moreover, of what constitutes a true vocation to the priesthood are extremely severe, and which lays upon its clergy the strictest and most trying of obligations, would secure a very large proportion of vocations from amongst her comparatively few rich or aristocratic members. The thing would be wholly contrary to what one may reasonably expect of human nature. Our best days are yet to come. There are, of course, a few such vocations, as you can easily ascertain on inquiry. In many a religious community and monastery in England, you will find the son of an

ancient name and lineage, connected with some of the very noblest and oldest families in England, living the humble and retiring life of a religious, having gladly and joyfully abandoned for Christ all that the world values so much. On the Continent, the son of a reigning king not very long ago became a humble priest, devoting his life to the welfare of the poor in one of the very poorest and most unattractive districts of this great city. But, of course, this number is limited, and will most probably remain limited for yet many years to come.

But, when you say that a very large proportion of the English Catholic clergy are not gentlemen, you make a very sad and grievous mistake. In saying this, I distinguish, of course, between the accepted conventional meaning of that term and its natural and proper meaning. In the former sense, the term unhappily is still applied to men who, although possessing certain advantages of birth and station, may not deserve the designation for any other and worthier reason, seeing that they do not necessarily possess those qualities and characteristics which constitute the gentlemen in the latter and truer sense of the term, our modern life having introduced the most regrettable confusion into the matter.

But if you mean to assert that the majority of the English Catholic clergy are not gentlemen in the latter and truer sense of the term, you are greatly in error, and you are speaking from hearsay and from

those absurd notions respecting our priests which are current in Anglican quarters, not from personal knowledge. Or perhaps you have somewhere met or seen a priest who, in your judgment, had not a particularly refined face, or who did not wear such an immaculate and well-cut coat as the Anglican parson does.

I have, as you know, met a great many Anglican clergymen in the course of my life, and, of course, I am constantly coming in personal contact with Catholic priests; and whatever the original social status and association of the latter may have been, I have always found them to be most kindly and courteous in their bearing, and most considerate and thoughtful for the feelings of others, and, indeed, in most instances, wholly devoid of that "side" and self-consciousness which so frequently distinguishes the Anglican parson. Catholic priests are, for the most part, gentle and sympathetic and retiring, and in many instances display far more tact and right feeling than their more privileged Anglican and Protestant brethren are apt to do. Their very life is calculated to have a refining influence on their bearing and character. If they have not always the polished manners of first-rate society, they practise none of its shams and hypocrisies; and if they have not the inherited refinements of a class, they have that refinement which is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, of a nature which is in all things subject to the higher law of the Spirit.

This, of course, is the product, in the first place, of their vocation, and, in the second, of the prolonged and laborious process of training through which they are required to pass. I do not know whether you are aware what that training means, what time it occupies, what subjects it covers, what an amount of self-denial and self-restraint it involves. If you are really interested in the matter, ask any priest in your neighbourhood to give you a fuller account of it. You will find that the education of an Anglican parson is mere child's play in comparison with that of a Catholic priest, and that the latter is almost always an infinitely better educated man than the former.

Some little time ago I had occasion to spend some weeks in two English Catholic seminaries, and had an opportunity of seeing the whole of the daily life of both professors and students, and I must confess that the impressions which I carried away with me were of the most favourable character. Indeed, I count some of my best and warmest friends amongst those kindly-natured young fellows, whose life is a daily self-denial, and who have surrendered all that makes human life pleasant in order that they may win, and work for, Christ.

And, for the most part, the life of the professors differs very little from that of the students: it is of a semi-monastic character, and involves many a great and daily self-sacrifice. Where do you find in your Anglican Colleges a man of the highest mental quali-

fications who, after a prolonged educational career, is content to shut himself up in one of these colleges, and to teach philosophy, or science, or theology, at a salary of forty pounds a year, with the prospect, perhaps, of a six weeks' holiday once a year at his own expense at the very most. Many of them, I assure you, are men of the highest intellectual attainment, thoroughly in touch with the best culture, and yet content, and indeed compelled, to wear the shabbiest of coats, and to live the most retiring and self-denying of lives.

Some of them, I fancy, seldom or never get the opportunity of enjoying a real holiday, but simply spend their annual season of rest in "supplying" for some other hard-worked parish priest of their aquaintance. But I love and admire these men, and I thank God for them. I thank God that they are not gentlemen in the conventional meaning of the term. Heaven knows whether they would then be what they now are: men of pure and holy lives, working and striving for the highest possible end, and concentrating all the energies of their life, and all the fruit of their intellectual labour, upon the attainment of the one great and holy aim and purpose.

And what holds good regarding them, also holds good regarding the greater portion of our parish priests: simple, noble, self-denying men, working late and early, with no prospect of any kind of reward or recompense here below. Believe me, the Catholic cause in England is safe while we have

such men, and, from this point of view, too, the victory is *already* ours.

But you must not conclude that, because I am saying all this, I am an enthusiastic optimist, for whom all things pertaining to his own Church are painted *couleur de rose*. On the contrary, I am well aware that there are flaws, and even grave ones. I am here speaking of but one aspect of the matter—of the *kind* of men our priests are, and of the spirit which is animating them. There is another and a different aspect, I know it full well! and much has been said and written on that subject of late.

The education of our young clergy is, I am inclined to think, too, of far too one-sided a character. It is apt to make of them too much of the scholastic and the theologian, too little of the man of the world. They are, to my mind, not sufficiently in touch with the more modern movements of thought, and with that wider life of the world, of which they are by-and-by to form so important and dominant a part. Their relations to, and their ideas of, women are, I fancy, artificial and antiquated and out of date, and a wider and more generous liberty in this direction would, in my opinion, give them a better and truer insight into life, and would greatly improve their own position, and their opportunities of influencing the age in which they live.

But this is a very difficult and complicated question, on which experts alone are qualified to speak

the last word. I know that it teems with difficulties, and we might easily fall into those mistakes which are so fatal to the spiritual life of the Protestant communions. Some modifications and changes in our system of education have already been introduced: more are almost certain to follow. The Catholic Church moves slowly, but she moves very deliberately, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that her one and sole aim is at all times the salvation and welfare of souls.

I cannot conceive what could have brought about that absurd and uncatholic and unapostolic notion, that a priest should, above all things, be a gentleman, *i.e.*, that he should have the manners and polish of a particular class, and that he should be of superior descent. The whole idea clearly is utterly contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and to the very principles laid down in the Gospels. It is a very striking example of that general confusion of things which was introduced by the religious revolution of the fifteenth century. The very Founder of Christianity, and His apostles and first disciples, were men of lowly birth and station, and the first vocations to the priestly life came to the humblest and simplest and most despised of men. And if our changed modes of life, and the exigencies of a different age, have, in a sense, introduced different needs and requirements, all that we have a right to ask is that our priests should be kindly, and courteous, and

sympathetic, and that they should, above all things, be men of spiritual power and insight, and gentlemen from God's point of view. May God preserve us from a priesthood taken exclusively from one particular class of society, and constituting, as in the Anglican Communion, a distinct and universally distinguishable type of men. This Anglican notion is absurd and artificial and unspiritual, and, perhaps more than any other thing, exhibits the distinctly Protestant and modern character of that Church. With us, it is a question of *Divine* vocation, and of a careful and systematic education: it is not, thank God! a question of birth and of station, and of family connection or prestige.

What our priests really are, we Catholics alone know, for we come in the closest and most intimate contact with them in the Confessional; and I am confident that, if you were to institute a census throughout England as to their character and efficiency, the verdict would be a spontaneous and a unanimous one. For some considerable time my own confessor was a humble young Irish priest, of evidently lowly birth, in a very poor London parish; but I am certain that no better confessor, or more kindly and judicious counsellor and friend, Catholic ever had. It is, believe me, a grievious mistake to judge these matters from hearsay, and on the ground of some old-established, popular notion. Many loud-tongued Protestants, writing or talking about Catholic

priests, have never spoken to one in their lives, and many more are so ungenerous that they would not seek one out, lest they should find themselves compelled to modify their dearly-loved and traditional opinions of them.

One word respecting the *Celibacy of the Clergy.* It is, of course, as you know, an ecclesiastical, not a Divine, law; but how, in the face of the plain statements of the New Testament, any instructed Christian can talk about its being an unnatural institution, passes my comprehension. It is a supernatural state of life, certainly, and one which the grace of God alone can enable a man to enter upon, and to persevere in, but it must surely be clear to the most superficial student of the New Testament that it is the state of life most highly commended by both Christ and His apostles. Experience, too, has constantly shown that the highest form of the religious life can be better cultivated in the celibate state than amidst the cares and anxieties of the family life.

You talk as though the Catholic authorities were in the habit of violently seizing hold of a certain number of immature young men, scarcely knowing their own minds, of forcing them into Holy Orders, and of laying upon them a heavy and unnatural and life-long burden which, in after years, they would be only too glad to shake off if they could.

This picture is, of course, a reflection of the heated morbid Protestant imagination on this subject. You must remember that the Church, in her own interests, takes ample time to thoroughly test the reality of the Divine vocation of her candidates for Holy Orders. All the seminaries, as a matter of fact, have to allow for and reckon with a certain number of failures in this respect, which, in the course of the prolonged educational process, have to be weeded out, and which are most thoroughly weeded out after full and repeated consultation with those best able to form an accurate judgment on the subject. I know of some instances in which the educational authorities have urged the retirement of a student after the completion of the fourth and even the fifth year of training, feeling certain that there was no true vocation to the priestly and celibate life. Those men who are finally admitted to Holy Orders have thus had an opportunity of thoroughly weighing and considering the matter for a number of years, of again and again discussing the pros and cons with experienced confessors, and of ascertaining the powers and possibilities of their nature so far as human judgment can go in such a matter. They therefore take the greatest step of their lives with their eyes wide open, and with many and repeated opportunities of knowing and of understanding themselves.

That there may be in the best of them great

struggles and difficulties and temptations in after years, is indeed highly probable; but those who dwell upon this aspect of the matter seem to ignore the fact that entrance upon a supernatural state of life and complete consecration to God also imparts exceptional supernatural powers, and that there is very great grace given to a priest wherewith to overcome nature and to resist temptation. Is not this (the constant struggle to overcome nature in one form or another), after all, the normal course of a Christian in any other state of life?

There is, to my mind, something sickly and unwholesome in the attitude which the married Anglican clergy take up with regard to this matter, and certainly something most uncatholic and unapostolic in their attempt to bring forward the married state as the higher one of the two. If one thing is needed in the age in which we live, it is surely a practical and constant demonstration of the fact that men *can* live wholesome, rational lives in the world and amongst men, without the indulgence of that side of their nature which is the cause of the fall and ruin of so many, and which so few are able to keep within proper control. Does not the life of a Catholic priest prove that there is such a thing as a supernatural state, a higher spiritual law ruling and dominating the lower, and that men can be in the strictest sense of the word, "in the world, and yet not of it." Nobody finds fault with the married clergy of the Anglican

Establishment. They are essentially a social, not a spiritual, institution, and nobody asks of them the exercise of the true spiritual functions of the Catholic priest. But it is absurd and contemptible of them, enjoying, as they are, the manifold blessings and privileges of the family life, to speak lightly of those lonely and celibate men who, instead of being the fathers of natural families, are content to be the true fathers of their great spiritual families, and who, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, exemplify in themselves the realisation of the true Apostolic ideal.

That out of so vast a number of men there should be one here and there who falls a victim to the temptations of the world and of his life, is the most natural thing in the world; and for really sensible men, who know the world, and the power of the flesh, and the life of priests, it must be a source of astonishment, but also of course of intense gratitude, that these defections should be so few. As a matter of fact, you hear far more frequently of an Anglican parson having run away with another man's wife, or of a Nonconformist minister having seduced a member of his congregation, than of a Catholic priest having yielded to the far more numerous temptations of his life.

As to the advantages and disadvantages of the respective states of life I need not say much, because it would, in my opinion, be wholly beside the point.

The Anglican parson is a peculiar and unique institution, and is, and always will be, a social rather than a spiritual force, and as such his married state and the social influence and prestige which it carries with it, is probably the preferable one of the two. But in that state he never was and never can be a Catholic priest. The two ideas are wholly incompatible, and every instructed Catholic knows it full well. For the Catholic priest there is, and can be, but the one life—that of a childless father of a great spiritual family, restrained by no personal ties, in order that he may be restrained by many public and spiritual ones; living wholly, and always, and to the end of his life, according to the law of the spirit, and not according to that of the flesh; and exhibiting constantly in his own person that crucifixion of our nature, without which there cannot be the true birth and resurrection of the spirit. You will understand all this better when you are a Catholic yourself—a consummation for which I am earnestly and constantly hoping and praying.

12*th January* 189—.

I need hardly say that I am delighted with your letter just received. Its very tone is evidence to me that your entire attitude towards the Catholic Church has undergone a very considerable change since last I wrote to you, and I can see very plainly that you have been hard at work reading Catholic Theology.

Your present letter certainly breathes the spirit of the disciple, not, as heretofore, that of the critic. This is, to my mind, the most promising and hopeful sign of all. By far the larger proportion of modern men commence their inquiry into the truth of Christianity and of the Catholic Church as *critics*, and they continue critics to the end of their days. When a man has once become a *learner*, in the true sense of the term, the result may be predicted with considerable confidence. There are, broadly speaking, only these two attitudes of mind.

And, of course, as you rightly say, the moral aspect of the matter must be kept in view throughout. "Truth is apprehended not only by the intelligence, but by the whole soul." Some people seem

to be under the impression that the study of the Christian evidences may be taken up like the study of any other subject, and that a result may be arrived at, irrespective of the moral attitude and state of soul in which the inquiry is approached. They are forgetful of the fact that, in the matter of Revealed Religion, it is supernatural, not natural, things which they are handling, and that for a right and full understanding of them, supernatural forces require to be called into operation. I am persuaded, for instance, that, apart of course from the direct and extraordinary action of Almighty God, no person of impure or ill-regulated life, or of intellectual conceit, however great his achievement may be in other spheres of human activity, will discover religious truth so long as he continues in that condition, and that it will in no case be discovered by the man who does not humbly and assiduously pray —who, in other words, will not cultivate that state of soul and mind in which the highest truth can alone be apprehended. A man's soul must, in some way, be in *rapport* or *affinity* with that transcendental world from which he is seeking a disclosure, and he must place himself in correspondence with the laws and forces which are known to govern it.

Here, of course, lies the solution of the problem to which you refer. It accounts for the extraordinary circumstance that some persons, although believing all Catholic doctrine, and thoroughly con-

vinced of the Church's Divine mission and character, nevertheless never become Catholics themselves; and that many others, although forever learning, yet never come to the knowledge of the truth. It is clearly not an intellectual question only, but also a moral and a spiritual one. Read the treatise on *Grace* in any one of the great standard works on Catholic Doctrine. You will see how wonderfully the Church has worked out this subject, and how clear and rational and convincing her theologians are. It is Mr W. S. Lilly, I think, who says: "The Christian evidences presuppose a certain moral sympathy in an inquirer. They are, in fact, moral, and not mathematical and experimental. . . . Christianity expects to be met—if not half-way, yet to a certain point—by desire based upon a clear discernment of its need of knowledge, and of its need of strength. If the evidences of Christianity were of such a character that no honest and educated man could possibly reject them without intellectual folly, whatever his moral condition or history might be, the Christian belief would be, like a university degree, a certificate of a certain sort of mental capacity, but it would be no criterion whatever of a man's past or present relation to God. St Paul makes faith such a criterion: because faith is a moral as much as an intellectual act; because it combines our sense of moral want with our perception of the bearings of moral evidence. Thus, a margin of deficiency, mathe-

matically speaking, is even necessary in the Christian evidences, as a whole, in order to leave room for the exercise of faith—that vital emphatic act of the whole soul, by which the soul throws itself upon the invisible, and thus secures the proper moral objects of Christianity itself."

The Church's authoritative teaching respecting the doctrines to which you further draw attention in your letter can, of course, be ascertained by reference to the works from which you have quoted several times, and which are therefore most probably now in your possession. You cannot possibly do better. But here, too, I will gladly put the matter from my own point of view, or, rather, will state the argument in favour of the truth of these doctrines in that form which most strongly appeals to my own particular order of mind.

Respecting *the Doctrine of the Blessed Virgin*, I cannot do better than give you the following three notes. The first is from one of Newman's works; the second by a modern writer; the third, a very striking statement from the pen of Mr W. H. Mallock, himself not a Catholic, as you know:—

Newman * says this:—

"Mere Protestants have seldom any real perception of the doctrine of God and Man in one Person. They speak in a dreamy, shadowy way of Christ's divinity;

* *Discourses to Mixed Congregations.*

but, when their meaning is sifted, you will find them very slow to commit themselves to any statement sufficient to express the Catholic dogma. They will tell you at once that the subject is not to be inquired into, for it is impossible to inquire into it at all, without being technical and subtle. . . . Now, if you would witness against these unchristian opinions, if you would bring out, distinctly and beyond mistake and evasion, the simple idea of the Catholic Church that God is Man, could you do it better than by laying down in St John's words that 'God *became* Man'? And could you express this again more emphatically and unequivocally than by declaring that He was *born* a man, or that He had a *Mother?* The world allows that God *is* Man; the admission costs it little, for God is everywhere, and (as it may say) is everything, but it shrinks from confessing that God is the Son of Mary. It shrinks, for it is at once confronted with a severe fact, which violates and shatters its own unbelieving view of things; the revealed doctrine forthwith takes its true shape and receives an historical reality; and the Almighty is introduced into His own world at a certain time, and in a definite way. . . .

"The confession that Mary is Deipara, or the Mother of God, is that safeguard wherewith we seal up and secure the doctrine of the Apostle from all evasion, and that test whereby we detect all the pretences of those bad spirits of 'Antichrist, which have gone out

into the world.' It declares that He is God, it implies that He is Man; it suggests to us that He is God still, though He has become Man, and that He is true Man though He is God. By witnessing to the *process* of the union, it secures the reality of the two *subjects* of the union, of the divinity and of the manhood. If Mary is the Mother of God, Christ is understood to be Emmanuel, God with us. And hence it was, that, when time went on, and the bad spirits and false prophets grew stronger and bolder, and found a way into the Catholic Church itself, then the Church, guided by God, could find no more effectual and sure way of expelling them than that of using this word *Deipara* against them; and, on the other hand, when they came up again from the realms of darkness, and plotted the utter overthrow of Christian Faith in the sixteenth century, then they could find no more certain expedient for their hateful purpose than that of reviling and blaspheming the prerogatives of Mary, for they knew full sure that, if they could once get the world to dishonour the Mother, the dishonour of the Son would follow close. The Church and Satan agreed in this, that Son and Mother went together; and the experience of three centuries has confirmed their testimony: for Catholics, who have honoured the Mother, still worship the Son; while Protestants, who now have ceased to confess the Son, began then by scoffing at the Mother."

The late Father Lockhart, Newman's old Oxford disciple, but his predecessor in conversion to Catholicism, has said of the *Immaculate Conception*:—"It is older than the world, the oldest truth we know of, except the nature and being of God Himself." "Not, he is careful to distinguish," says another writer, "the oldest doctrine, but the oldest truth. Like every truth held by the Catholic Church, it is bound up with the central truth of the Incarnation. Now that Church, in all its faith and theology, makes this great claim: to see truth—let it be reverently said—from the point of view of God, from an eternal standpoint. And that, because by Divine provision and appointment, the voice of the Church upon matters of Divine faith is the voice of Divine truth. . . .

"How, then, did the teachers of the early centuries declare the mind of the Church, divinely guided, upon the place and singularity of the Blessed Virgin? They went in thought and contemplation back to the mystical origin of man, to the Divine scheme of creation; they saw, with St Thomas Aquinas, how 'the Incarnation is the exaltation of human nature and consummation of the universe.' Hebrew monotheism, and Greek metaphysics, and Eastern theosophy, with all their strange and pathetic combinations, the dreams of men longing for the everlasting light, found in the doctrines of the Triune God and of the God made Man the answer to their desire. What little children and ignorant men took for the strength and

hope of their lives came to the wise and great with all the wisdom and greatness of supreme truth, transcending, but not stultifying, the intimations of their highest reason. It has been held by no small school of theologians that the Incarnation would have taken place had there been no 'fall of man'; the opinion at least illustrates the unique position, and, so to speak, *status* of that central truth, in the Divine counsels, as taught by Catholic theology. The Incarnation was predestined—the humanity of God, His assumption of man's nature and flesh from a daughter of the sons of men; she, therefore, in the eternal place—the Mother of God—was predestined likewise. As Adam —that is, man—fell from his high and holy plane, through Eve—that is, woman—so Christ, the second Adam, restored man to the state of grace, through the willing co-operation of Mary, the second Eve.

"If the early Church, before the Nicene Council, believed in the divinity of Christ, so also has the Church, from the earliest ages onward, believed in the Immaculate Conception of Christ's Mother. Consult whom you will: Cardinal Newman's letter to Dr Pusey, or the able work of an Anglican scholar, Dr Lee; go to the Greeks and Russians, to the Churches of the East; take up St Augustine or St Alfonso de Liguori. The testimony of all times and places is overwhelming, and it is for those who profess Catholic principles, yet reject Catholic conclusions, to justify the teaching of the Fathers. They drew out the wealth

of implicit truth in that mystical parallel, or rather antithesis. Eve was conceived without sin; she was the natural and spiritual mother of mankind. Through her disobedience Adam fell, and mankind in him. Mary, if she be the second Eve, was conceived without sin, to become the spiritual mother of mankind in bearing Christ—God made Man; through her obedience, God was enabled to become Man that mankind might be restored to God. . . .

"Conceived under the law of sin and death, she was preserved, at the animation of her body, the creation of her soul, from all taint of sin, and underwent death only as a child of Adam in the natural order; and her Assumption, though not an article of faith, is the ancient and almost necessary belief flowing from the consideration of those truths concerning her which are of faith. . . .

"The Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Virgin is no isolated thing, unconnected with the fundamental truths of Christianity: as the fathers of Ephesus in the fifth century knew well, that doctrine itself is a safeguard and bulwark of the greatest doctrines. For Catholic theology is one indivisible whole, indissolubly united and interdependent."

Mr Mallock writes, in *Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption* (p. 146): "The *devotion to the Virgin Mary* first sprung up amongst the mass of believers naturally, because the idea of God's Mother, with all

her motherly love, with all her virgin purity, and with all her human sorrows, allied so closely to omnipotence, touched countless hearts in a way which was, in all cases, practically similar; just as the offer of a helping hand would make a similar appeal to each one of a multitude of men drowning. The official teaching of Rome with regard to the Virgin's sinlessness, and the degree of worship which is her due, has been the work, no doubt, of the few, not of the many—of priests, of theologians, of Councils. But the doctrines which have been thus defined have not been fabricated by themselves. The doctrines have had their origin in the pious opinions which have spontaneously shaped themselves in the minds of innumerable Christians, as a result of a multitude of independent, spiritual experiences. Gradually theologians have reduced these to logical and coherent forms, and at last they have been submitted to one great representative Council."

Here is a very striking note by Newman, on *Miracles*:—

"We affirm that the Supreme Being has wrought miracles on earth since the time of the Apostles. Protestants deny it. Why do we affirm? Why do they deny? We affirm it on a First Principle; they deny it on a First Principle. And on either side the First Principle is made to be decisive of the question. . . . Both they and we start with

the miracles of the Apostles, and then their First Principle, or presumption against our miracles, is, 'What God did once, He is *not* likely to do again.' While our First Principle, or presumption for our miracles, is this: 'What God did once, He *is* likely to do again.' . . . The two parties start with contradictory principles, and they determine the particular miracles which are the subject of dispute by their respective principles, without looking to such testimony as may be brought in their favour. . . .

"Catholics hold the mystery of the Incarnation, and the Incarnation is the most stupendous event which ever can take place on earth; and after it, and henceforth, I do not see how we can scruple at any miracle on the mere ground of its being unlikely to happen. . . . When we start with assuming that miracles are not unlikely, we are putting forth a position which lies embedded, as it were, and involved in the great revealed fact of the Incarnation. . . .

"Miracles are not only not unlikely, they are positively likely, and for this simple reason, because, for the most part, when God begins, He goes on. We conceive that when He first did a miracle, He began a series; what He commenced, He continued. What has been, will be. Surely this is good and clear reasoning. To my own mind, certainly, it is incomparably more difficult to believe that the Divine Being should do one miracle, and no more,

than that He should do a thousand; that He should do one great miracle only, than that He should do a multitude of less besides. . . . If the Divine Being does a thing once, He is, judging by human reason, likely to do it again. This surely is common sense. . . .

"Suppose you yourself were once to see a miracle, would you not feel that experience to be like passing a line? Should you, in consequence of it, declare, 'I never will believe another if I hear of one.' Would it not, on the contrary, predispose you to listen to a new report? Would you scoff at it, and call it priestcraft, for the reason that you had actually seen one with your own eye? I think you would not. Then, I ask, what is the difference of the argument, whether you have seen one or believe one? You believe the Apostolic miracles; therefore, be inclined, beforehand, to believe later ones."—*Present Position of Catholics*, p. 298.

I do not suppose that any really educated person of our time still experiences any moral or intellectual difficulty respecting the Catholic *Doctrine of Prayers for the Dead.* Like all Catholic doctrines, it has its foundation in the inmost depths of our human nature, and its reintroduction into the dogmatic system of the Protestant Church, after centuries of wrangling and of controversy, is in itself the most striking evidence that those needs of our nature

cannot safely and permanently be ignored and set aside.

The Reformation doctrine (now, happily, increasingly losing its hold upon thoughtful minds), imparting, as it does, the most bitter sting to death, and taking away every fragment of consolation from the Christian faith, is an outrage on the moral sense of mankind, and a distortion of Christian teaching; and the wonder to me is that it has survived so long, and that those who believe it, or who imagine they believe it, do not go mad. Life lived in the light of such a doctrine would be a veritable nightmare. That it is not, and that those accepting it remain of sound mind, is in itself evidence that the doctrine is not really and thoroughly believed in, but that it is confessed merely as a sort of inevitable theological inference.

The Catholic doctrine, on the other hand, is in harmony with our highest instincts, and with both Revelation and common sense. A Catholic prays that the light of Faith, which, during the lifetime of the departed, may perhaps have burnt feebly, may be fanned into flame by the action of spiritual forces and intelligences, set to work by his own prayers and those of the Church. He knows that the dead are really the living, and that his prayers are no less effective and acceptable because the soul has passed beyond the confines of the visible world.

"Those who make light of the efficacy of prayers for the dead are in a fair way to make light of the efficacy of prayers for the living. If it is argued that they are useless because God may be absolutely trusted to do the best for the dead without our prayers, that applies just as much to the living as to the dead."

In one of his essays on this subject, the late Mr R. H. Hutton, a loyal Anglican, and for many years the editor of *The Spectator*, said this:—

"As it is the very highest effect of prayer to connect the unseen with the seen world, and to convince men that God has regard to the cry of man, when it is in accordance with His spirit, nothing seems to be more fatal to that highest use of prayer than to represent it as strictly limited in its scope to those who are still with us, and entirely without possible result on those who are gone from us. How could the conception of the 'whole family in heaven and earth' be a true one, if the members of it who are on one side of the grave may properly pray only for those who are on the same side as themselves, but should treat those who are on the other side of it as beyond the range even of their intercessions? That is not one family, half of which may not even pray to God for blessings on the other half."

It is extremely interesting to note that, regarding this doctrine too, monumental research in the Roman

catacombs has yielded very striking and really conclusive evidence. It seems certain that the departed Christians of the ages of persecution were prayed for by their surviving friends and relatives, and that the doctrine of prayers for the dead must therefore have formed part of the dogmatic system of the earliest Church. To that necessary and normal development of it which this and all the other doctrines of the Catholic Church have experienced, and which they are bound to experience in the course of the centuries and in their action upon human thought, I have already referred in one of my earlier letters.

The granting of *Indulgences*, of course, presupposes the forgiveness of sin, and obliges the penitent to good works. Prayer, fasting, alms, are meritorious only if inspired by faith, and sanctified by grace. The honour—not adoration—paid to saints is subordinate to the worship of God, and only glorifies Him through His higher works.

The *Veneration of Images and Relics* proceeds from the most natural of impulses, and is intended for the originals, of which these things are but reminders.

The moral and religious depression of Italy springs not from the Church, but from other influences—notably the Rationalistic movement which began in England during the last century. The true solution

is not Protestantism or Rationalism, but a revival of Catholic faith and practices.

I can see that you are laying hold of the great supernatural principle on which the Catholic Church is constructed, and which underlies all Catholic teaching. It is, of course, in consequence of the denial, or rather the entire setting aside, of this principle, that the modern Higher Criticism finds it possible to arrive at its absurd and uncatholic and unhistorical notions. May God further help and guide you!

16*th January* 189—.

I am very glad indeed that some incidental statement in my last letter has directed your attention to that much debated subject:—*The Respective Merits of the Catholic and Protestant Forms of Christian Thought in their relation to National Progress and Success.*

It is a subject on which the most arrant nonsense is still being talked—yes, and by educated men too—and which, perhaps more than any other, demonstrates how persistently a strong prejudice can cause a fundamental error, which a mere schoolboy might be able to correct, to perpetuate itself, and how it can make the wisest of men deliberately shut their eyes to plain historical fact and truth.

To the popular, but mostly, of course, very uneducated, platform orator, this subject is still a thing to conjure with, and one which he will invariably trot out when all other arguments have failed. "Look at the moral condition of Spain and of Mexico," are phrases with which most of us are familiar. There is something in this form of argument which, as he knows full well, appeals very strongly to the peculiarities of

the English temperament, and to the superficial order of mind.

But, just as all the other strongholds of Protestantism have had to yield one by one before the advance of fuller knowledge and of a more careful inquiry, this one too is now being undermined by accurate research, and by the modern appeal to history and to common sense.

But I need not put myself to the trouble of setting forth my own views on this subject. It has recently been very fully discussed in the columns of the *Spectator*, and I cannot do better than send you the concluding portion of the article in which that very excellent Anglican Weekly sums up the argument. I am also sending you a portion of a very interesting letter from the pen of Mgr. Canon Vaughan, a brother of the Cardinal, which forcibly exhibits the utter fallacy of the Protestant assertions from both the historical and the traditional standpoint. His argument is incontrovertible, and it is certain that hereafter the old falsehoods will no longer be propagated, except perhaps by men who are either devoid of all historical knowledge, and ignorant of the fundamental principles of Christianity, or whose personal interests or lack of common morality constrain them to tell deliberate lies. Let me have these papers back when you have quite done with them; but not until you have "marked, learned, and inwardly digested" the truths which they contain.

Mgr. Vaughan writes: "It has always puzzled me to discover upon what grounds Protestants make prosperity a test of the truth of their religion. There is no warrant for such a view in the pages of the New Testament. No vestige or shadow of such a principle is discernible in the teaching of Christ. On the contrary, the whole trend of His teaching, in so far as it bears on the subject at all, tells the other way. 'Hardly shall a rich man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,' 'It were easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven,' etc., are but samples of hundreds of similar texts that might be quoted. The one solitary instance in the New Testament occurring to my mind in which any promise of riches and dominion is made, is found in Matthew iv. 9; but then it is the devil who makes it: 'All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' A reward promised to devil-worshippers will hardly be invoked by Christians, even though they be members of that kingdom upon whose possessions, we are constantly reminded, 'the sun never sets.' . . .

"Would men of the character and training of the Apostles ever build up an empire such as the British Empire? Men totally indifferent to wealth, and reputation, and dominion, and worldly success? Would they, whose chief boast was that they had 'left all things to follow Christ,' be the sort of

persons suitable for the purpose? I mean men like St Peter, who, when Simon Magus attempted 'to transact a little business' with him, exclaimed: 'Thy money perish with thee' (Acts viii. 20); or St Paul, who confessed that, 'having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content' (1 Tim. vi. 8). Or indeed any of the others? Scarcely. Yet they are, *par excellence* and before all, 'the salt of the earth and the light of the world'; for to this God Himself bears witness. Mr Henson seems to wish religion to be judged by its results. This is fair enough so long as the results looked for are spiritual rather than commercial and political, and so long as our survey is not confined to this world. The Church of Christ is not a commercial syndicate. The greatest failure in this life is not inconsistent with the most signal triumph in the next. Christ's Church is, of course, His Kingdom, but some of us seem to forget that His Kingdom is 'not of this world.' Nay, more: we are expressly told that 'the world is the enemy of God,' not His friend. Moreover, it is 'seated (which implies a settled state) in wickedness.'

"But let us waive every objection and assume—merely for the sake of argument—that national prosperity and power are unmistakable signs of Divine approval. Consider into what a quagmire such a theory lands us. To start with: if the theory is sound, it must be applicable to all time. I must be allowed to look out upon the world, right down through the

ages, and to deal with it as a whole. With what result? Well, that I find the balance of national prosperity sways and shifts in different and often opposite directions. At present it indeed points to Protestantism; a few hundred years ago—say in the time of Philip II. of Spain—it pointed to Catholicism; but, as a whole, its tendency is most certainly in favour of paganism and rank infidelity. Egypt, and Greece, and pagan Rome, will serve as illustrations of what I mean. Considered in the moment of their greatest development and highest achievement, they have no parallel in any State of the present day. Neither Great Britain nor Germany can compare with the Roman Empire at the zenith of its prosperity. From the point of view of splendour, magnificence, power, dominion, military glory and conquest, and purely worldly greatness, it eclipses every modern Empire on the face of the earth. A well-known historian speaks of it as 'the most mighty Empire the world has ever seen.' Did something in paganism favour development and account for this success? And, if so, are we to favour paganism? It is surely evident that any educated pagan, living, let us say, in the reign of Augustus, might have taken as his theme 'Idolatry and National Success,' and have argued about it very much as Mr Henson now argues about Protestantism and National Success, or about 'Romanism and Decay,' only, probably his arguments would have

been more subtle and his rhetoric more stirring. Yet what weight can one attach to his words while the infallible words of Christ are ringing in our ears? England is rich and wealthy indeed, but then Christ says, 'Woe to you who are rich.' She has extended her dominions, and added to her territory and possessions; but, again, it is written, 'Woe to you who join house to house, and lay field to field' (Isaiah v. 8). 'Where the Roman Church has had a free hand . . . national greatness has declined,' writes Mr Henson. If 'greatness' be taken, not in a spiritual and supernatural, but in a worldly and material sense, this may be true. Speaking broadly, it is no doubt the wealthy and prosperous nations and races that abandoned the Catholic Faith in the sixteenth century, but this fact serves merely to enforce and to light up the truth contained in St Paul's warning words: 'They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition' (1 Tim. vi. 9). In our opinion the richer and more prosperous States did actually 'fall into a snare' when they fell into heresy. And while we lament their defection from the centre of Christian unity, we cannot be wholly surprised, for we have been warned by God, through the mouth of His Apostle, that 'the love of money is the root of all evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the Faith.' 'Led astray from the Faith':

yes, that to our minds describes precisely what has happened to the wealthy, luxurious, money-seeking, money-making, money-loving nations, with their keen commercial instincts, their business habits, their daring speculating spirit, their astounding enterprise, and their worship of the 'almighty dollar.' I cannot, of course, expect members of the Church of England to accept such a view, though I know not how they can deny it. But without adopting the view, perhaps they will not refuse to hear how this prosperity theory, so often insisted upon, strikes a Catholic."

This is from the *Spectator*:—

"Nor can we, if we narrow the controversy to Catholic and Protestant, agree with Macaulay and Dr Welldon. It is not even true that in all cases Protestantism has secured earthly prosperity, and Catholicism the reverse. If they had, that would be no proof of anything, except that Protestantism had attracted the strong races, and Catholicism the feeble ones, just as Stoicism in the Roman period attracted the proud, and Christianity the wretched; but they have not. Compare Belgium, with its devotedly Catholic population, with Sweden, which is entirely Protestant, or with Switzerland, in which the religions are almost equally divided. Or compare the Rhenish provinces of Prussia and their Catholic population with the strictly Protestant population of the two Mecklenburgs, or even the Protestant cultivators of

Brandenburg and Pomerania. It seems to us that if we accept prosperity or power as tests of religious truth—and we accept neither, holding that a single man under sentence of torture might be fuller of true religion than his judges—we ignore causes at least as powerful, namely, race, the tendency to multiply, and the habit, which has palpably nothing to do with religion, of continuous industry. The North of Ireland is more prosperous than the South of Ireland because the North of Ireland is occupied, or at all events directed, by men of the Scoto-English breed, who are restless in poverty, who love order, and who are nearly as industrious as the worst race under heaven, the Chinese. Fill Ireland with ultra-Catholic Flemings, and Ireland would be filled with a people making money every day, using her streams, her meadows, her fish, and, above all, her many facilities for manufactures. England is great because of the blood of her people, their energy, their freedom, and their industry, not because of their creed. Fill her with Celtic Huguenots, and she would be a little land, very happy, very contented, very good, and with an entire incapacity for the Empire of the Seas, which is the source and guarantee of British prosperity. It is true that the magnificent tolerance of Englishmen has enabled England to rule dark races, far exceeding her sons in number, without popular rebellions; but does that tolerance proceed from her creed or from her superb pride, the pride of Roman

patricians mingled with a respect for the results of personal liberty, which she derives from her race and her historic development? Pagans steeped to the lips in evil doctrines grow as rich under British protection as Englishmen themselves. Is it the truth of their faith that makes the Parsees one of the most prosperous of communities, or is it their own energy, and industry, and love of acquiring cash? It seems to us that religion is degraded, not elevated, when we try it by a test, the logical conclusion of which is that the apostles ought to have developed into ministers of state, and the disciples into the Barings, of the ancient world. There is fatness and the pride of fatness in such a view of truth and its results.

"We have no proof that the submissiveness (of the character of Catholics) is anti-Christian, or that if the non-Teutonic white races had adopted the doctrines of Luther they would have developed the qualities which make for earthly success. That the Latin races are dying we think probable, though not certain, as they have died before and risen again; but, granting the theory, is it certain that they are dying of Catholicism? Those who know them best, their own priests, say they are perishing of the want of it, that Italians have never lost their paganism, that Frenchmen have become Agnostics of a defiant type, and that Spaniards have relapsed into the hopeless materialism which was so strong a feature in their character when they conquered the New World and

desolated the Netherlands. To say in the same breath that they have abandoned Catholicism, and that Catholicism is the cause of their decay, is palpably unfair. If all Catholics were decaying alike, there would be some reason in the argument; but who makes the assertion about the Prussians of the Rhine, or who doubts that the Russians, Catholics in doctrine though not Papists in discipline, may yet dispute with the Protestant Teutons the sovereignty of the world? We dislike the spiritual pride which dictates Macaulay's opinions almost as much as that pride of purse which believes that a creed could be sent on earth by God in order that its votaries might have extra skill in the accumulation of wealth. Does the Protestant accumulate faster than the Jew, or conquer more rapidly than Alexander, Napoleon, or Pizarro?"

22nd January 189—.

I doubt very much whether I am equal to the task of adequately dealing with the subject which you introduce in your very interesting letter just received.

The Catholic Doctrine of the Last Things is, as you rightly say, one of immense importance and significance, seeing that it has a constant and most vital bearing upon the great central doctrine of the Incarnation, and that it lies at the very root and foundation of all Christian teaching. But it is, I admit, attended by peculiar and exceptional difficulties, and great and many, no doubt, are the objections which may, in this modern age, in fairness be urged against it. So long as you bear in mind that I am speaking neither from the standpoint of the theologian nor from that of the scientific expert, but from the point of view of a thoughtful layman who is immensely interested in both the fortunes of his Church and in the intellectual movements of his age, I will gladly answer your questions to the best of my knowledge and ability.

I am inclined to agree with you in thinking that it is to the difficulties attending the orthodox doctrine

of Hell and to its consequent rejection by many modern minds, that a great deal of the unbelief and misbelief of the present age must be ascribed. It is somehow tacitly agreed amongst educated persons that the doctrine is opposed to the claims of the modern intellect and of enlightened reason, and that it can no longer be accepted in its old historical and traditional form.

This view, which finds its support in the peculiar intellectual tendencies of our time, and in the more recent developments of Protestant liberal theology, is, of course, an immensely popular view, seeing that it not only relieves the moral feelings of mankind of a grievous burden, but that it is commonly supposed to solve a great many other doctrinal difficulties.

I am thoroughly convinced, however, that this popular view is due to a fundamental misconception of the doctrine itself, and that the difficulties which its rejection or modification introduces are as a matter of fact infinitely greater than those which it is supposed to solve.

You may remember what I pointed out to you in one of my earlier letters, namely, that "Christianity forms a connected whole of teachings, exhortations, and historical facts, each dependent on and explained by the other, each presupposing and connecting itself with the other. Only a few can perceive this connection, and still fewer, or perhaps even none, can keep it ever clearly before their minds. Opponents

direct their assaults only against isolated particulars taken out of their proper connection, and thus the attack may easily seem stronger and more plausible than the defence."

This is, I think, intensely true, and may be applied to the doctrine under consideration. Taken out of its proper place, and out of its connection with other doctrines implying and explaining it, the attack upon it may easily seem stronger and more plausible than the defence, and the difficulties surrounding it may appear greater than they really are. It was, I think, Huxley who once declared that, in his opinion, the mysteries of religion were child's play when compared with the mysteries of nature.

Still, I admit, of course, that these difficulties exist, and that they deserve and should receive the most sympathetic and respectful thought and consideration. It is evident that they come, in many instances, unbidden and uninvited, and that they are causing many an earnest soul very real disquietude and distress. They are part of the ordinary psychical environments of life, and we can no more escape them than we can escape breathing the atmosphere in which we live. All that we have a right to ask is, that those who experience their moral effect should pray as well as think and examine, and that they should not lightly cast aside, and thus perhaps imagine that they have got rid of, what the best and holiest of men in all ages have thoroughly held and believed, and what has

played so great and vital a part in the moral and spiritual history of mankind.

But now, respecting your own particular difficulties, we have, in the first place, constantly to bear in mind that the whole subject belongs, and must ever belong, to the sphere of mystery. We may approach it from any standpoint we like, we may establish analogies between it and the secrets of nature, and we may draw instructive and helpful inferences from the facts and experiences of human life: the mystery itself remains, and we shall never solve it satisfactorily this side of the grave. But this limitation lies in the constitution of our nature, and is no less experienced in the sphere of physical science and of nature's phenomena. The finite intellect cannot expect to apprehend the Infinite. A nature whose apprehension is limited to the exercise of five senses cannot hope to comprehend fully what lies beyond those five senses. The very notion of a Revelation, moreover, involves the thought of the disclosure of something which the human intellect cannot discover by itself, or which it can only understand in part. It is here that we are face to face with those three principles upon which the supernatural life depends, and without which a supernatural religion cannot get on: authority, faith, and humility. Without the recognition and acceptance of these three principles, and their continual application, it would be useless for any man to try and be a Catholic, and to live the supernatural life. There is the authority of God, Who

reveals; there is the faith of man, submitting his limited understanding to that authority; there is the virtue of humility, patiently accepting and reverently bowing before what the unaided intellect can neither discover nor fully understand. Apply these three principles to the doctrine of Hell, or, indeed, to any one of the doctrines of the Catholic Faith, and you will have no insuperable difficulty: leave them out of sight, or approach the matter from the purely rational and critical point of view, and the difficulty will assume boundless dimensions. Here lies the essential point of difference between the Catholic and Protestant methods of thought.

A second point, which should, I think, be steadily kept in view in reflecting on this solemn and difficult subject, is the circumstance that, in speaking of rewards and punishments, and their duration in the life beyond, we are, at best, speaking in imperfect human terms, and under human limitations. We are expressing, or rather trying to express, what is, strictly speaking, inexpressible. What is the meaning of eternity to creatures who are living in time? and what accurate conception can we have of a place, or degree, or duration of punishment in a sphere or condition of being which has neither time nor space? It is clear that, even before we come to an examination of the doctrine itself, we are already face to face with a great and insuperable difficulty, which is due to the limitation of our nature, and

which we can never hope to overcome. It must be evident that human ideas and human language can at best only approximately express Divine truth, and that the most striking human parallels and illustrations and analogies are but imperfect, and therefore inaccurate, presentations of the superhuman reality which lies behind them, and which is inexpressible.

I am persuaded that much absurd argumentation on this subject might have been avoided, and many a volume might have remained unwritten, had this very self-evident fact always been realised, and had it been steadily and consistently kept in view.

Now, coming to the doctrine itself, I may say at once that we Catholics believe it *because Christ has revealed it*, because the Church has always taught it, and because it is manifestly part of the orginal Divine deposit of Faith. To my own mind, the person who denies this, after intelligent and unprejudiced research, is past reasoning with. He either cannot or will not see, and no amount of argument or reasoning would convince him. If Christ did not teach what we can but call in human language the eternity of punishment, what did He teach, and what could His words possibly mean?

It is not here a question, remember, of this or that incidental utterance, capable, perhaps, of a variety of interpretations: it is a question of a great fundamental and root idea, which underlies and is

implied in the whole of the Christian system, and without which it becomes meaningless and unintelligible.

In the New Testament the Catholic doctrine is set forth clearly and unequivocally, and in the plainest and unmistakable terms of which human language is capable. And with all really intelligent men who acknowledge the Divine authority of Christ, the modern attempts to empty the pages of the New Testament of their manifest meaning must surely be considered a failure. Some of these attempts to circumvent truth are simply frivolous, and would deserve unbounded contempt, were it not that they are manifestly dictated by humane and praiseworthy motives. But the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ itself might thus be got rid of by the same method and with the same ease.

For myself, it would be easier by far to surrender Christianity itself than to admit that the orthodox doctrine of Hell is not contained in the New Testament, and that Christ did not desire to impress it upon the mind of mankind. "To presume," writes Mr Gladstone, "upon overriding the express declarations of the Lord Himself, delivered upon His own authority, is surely to break up Revealed Religion in its very groundwork, and to substitute for it a flimsy speculation, spun, like the spider's web, by the private spirit, and about as little capable as that web of bearing the strain by which the false is to be severed from the true."

The Catholic Church, therefore, true to her mission and to the charge committed to her by her Divine Founder, paying no heed to the passing fancies and philosophies of men, and ever remembering that she is to subject the nations to the truth, not to make the truth subject to them, authoritatively defines and teaches that the doctrine of Hell is part of Divine Revelation. The definition goes no further: it is that contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and accepted by the Church from the earliest times.

From what I have thus far said, you will see what the Catholic position is. We believe the doctrine because we believe that Christ has revealed it. We do not believe it because we fully understand it, or ever hope to understand it. To the stigma of bigotry and ignorance and narrow-mindedness which attaches to this position, we submit patiently and gladly, knowing that this is and has ever been the inevitable lot of the Christian, and that it is the duty as well as the privilege of a Catholic to bear what St Paul calls "the reproach of Christ." There remains to us the consciousness that, in believing the doctrine, we are in very excellent company, and that while we are responsible for accepting and declaring the *whole* council of God—no mere mutilated or distorted fragment of it, as human fancy and inclination may direct—we are not responsible, and are not called upon to solve all the difficulties and problems which

such an acceptance involves. You are mistaken, however, if you conclude that this position is as narrow and irrational as some modern writers would have you believe, and that there is nothing in human life and human science which may not reasonably be taken as pointing towards the truth of the doctrine. That is a view held by those popular writers and orators who have the ear of the half-educated multitude, and who, by certain well-known tricks of rhetoric, seek to present the doctrine in the worst possible light. It is not held by sober men of science, and by accurate thinkers.

Let me quote, in illustration of the truth of this statement, what two eminent and well-known men of science wrote on this subject some years ago. You may have come across that most interesting book, *The Unseen Universe*, by Professors P. G. Tait and B. Stewart. It says this:—

"To some extent, no doubt, Christ's description of the Universal Gehenna must be regarded as figurative, yet we do not think that the sayings of Christ with regard to the unseen world ought to be looked upon as nothing more than pure figures of speech. We feel sure that the principle of continuity cries out against such an interpretation—may they not rather be descriptions of what takes place in the unseen universe brought home to our minds by means of perfectly true comparisons with the pro-

cesses and things of this present universe which they most resemble? Thus the Christian Gehenna bears to the unseen universe precisely the same relation as the Gehenna of the Jews did to the city of Jerusalem. And just as the fire was always kept up, and the worm ever active in the one, so are we forced to contemplate an enduring process in the other. For we cannot easily agree with those who would limit the existence of evil to the present world. We know now that the matter of the whole of the visible universe is of a piece with that which we recognise here, and the beings of other worlds must be subject to accidental occurrences from their relation with the outer universe in the same way as we are. But if there be accident, must there not be pain and death? Now, these are naturally associated in our minds with the presence of moral evil. We are thus drawn, if not absolutely forced, to surmise that the dark thread known as evil is one which is very deeply woven into that garment of God which is called the universe. In fine, just as the arguments of this chapter lead us to regard the whole universe as eternal, so, in like manner, are we led to regard evil as eternal; and therefore we cannot easily imagine the universe without its Gehenna, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. The *process,* at all events, would seem to be most probably an enduring one."

In the course of an elaborate discussion of a kindred subject, *The Spectator*, not very long ago, remarked:—

"It certainly cannot be shown that either progressive purification or progressive degradation necessarily comes to an end . . . nor have we the smallest vestige of evidence that the downward progress of the will is a terminable process, and comes to any natural end. It may do so if immortality depends only on the union with God. But there is certainly a sort of antagonism to God, which appears to be progressive, as well as the union with Him, and antagonism means conscious existence no less than love means conscious existence. All we can say is, that if a man be what Mr Gladstone terms *immortalisable*, there is no final reason (unless it be God's mercy) why he should not be immortalisable in one direction as well as in the other; and that while a good deal of our moral and spiritual experience tends to show the durability of remorse, and the persistence of the growing incapacity to turn back after a certain point in the downward stage is reached, we have only the vaguest hope to rely on for our anticipation that all suffering must finally end."

Mr Gladstone has no hope for the finally impenitent, although he charitably believes that they will be few. He says:—

"How much do we know of the lot of the perversely wicked? They disappear into pain and sorrow; the

veil drops upon them in that condition. Every indication of a further change is withheld, so that if it be designed it has not been made known, and is nowhere incorporated with the Divine teaching. Whatever else pertains to this sad subject is withheld from our too curious and unprofitable gaze. The specific and limited statements supplied to us are, after all, only expressions in particular form of immovable and universal laws—on the one hand, of the irrevocable union between suffering and sin; on the other hand, of the perfection of the Most High—both of them believed in full, but only in part disclosed, and having elsewhere, it may be, their plenary manifestation in that day of the restitution of all things for which a groaning and travailing Creation yearns."

Let me give you two more striking quotations from the writings of two modern thinkers of note, neither of whom are Catholics, and neither of whom therefore are defending the orthodox doctrine simply because they are bound to consider it a necessary part of the authoritative teaching of their Church. Their defence is based on the conclusions of reason, and on the observed facts of the natural order, rather than on the postulates of dogmatic theology; and as such it can scarcely fail to have more weight with the non-Catholic mind than the arguments emanating from definitely Catholic or theological sources.

"I understand not," wrote Mr Ruskin, "the most

dangerous, because most attractive form of modern infidelity, which, pretending to exalt the beneficence of the Deity, degrades it into a reckless infinitude of mercy and blind obliteration of the work of sin: and which does this chiefly by dwelling on the manifold appearances of God's kindness on the face of Creation. Such kindness is, indeed, everywhere and always visible, but not alone. Wrath and threatening are invariably mingled with the love, and in the utmost solitudes of Nature the existence of Hell seems to me as legibly declared by a thousand spiritual utterances as that of Heaven. It is well for us to dwell with thankfulness on the unfolding of the flower, and the falling of the dew, and the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine; but the blasted trunk, the barren rock, the moaning of the bleak winds, the roar of the black, perilous, merciless whirlpools of the mountain streams, the solemn solitudes of moors and seas, the continual fading of all beauty into darkness, and of all strength into dust—have these no language for us? We may seek to escape their teaching by reasonings touching the good which is wrought out of all evil, but it is vain sophistry. The good succeeds to the evil, as day succeeds the night, but so also the evil to the good. Gerizim and Ebal, birth and death, light and darkness, Heaven and Hell, divide the existence of man and his futurity. . . . The love of God is, however, always shown by the predominance or greater sum of good in the end, but never by the

annihilation of evil. The modern doubts of eternal punishment are not so much the consequence of benevolence as of feeble powers of reasoning. Every one admits that God brings finite good out of finite evil. Why not, therefore, infinite good out of infinite evil." *

In his very instructive book, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality* (p. 672), the Rev. Dr Stewart D. F. Salmon writes:—

"So far as we can see, it is not a characteristic of God's providence to give a second chance to those who have let their opportunity slip. And besides this, the idea of a second probation seems grounded on a false and superficial estimate of our present life. Our life in this world is not a mere series of acts, good, bad, and indifferent. Its main feature is the impression of a character. Each of these acts has not only its moral attribute, but one and all they mould our character, so that our character at the moment of death is the result of all. We are, in a word, at death, what by our conduct in life we have made ourselves, and this stamp and character we carry with us behind the veil. If this dread truth be borne in mind, it will be seen that we cannot begin anew, as the doctrine of a second probation seems to imply. Rather, whatever help or discipline may await us in the future must take

* *The Stones of Venice*, Part III., pp. 138 and 139.

into account what we have been and what we are. The finality of life does not mean that the future existence is a stereotyped or merely passive condition. The fact that death marks the transition from the probation to the judgment, and seals the spiritual decisions on which the future turns, does not mean that we are to be simply what we have been. Life must live, and men must act and grow, and character must deepen. The future will be an existence in which we go on, and grow either in knowledge, love, and power of service, or in their opposites. But if so, the decisive matter is the trend of life with which we enter that future. The mercy of God extends to the last hour of life. The grace of God may be efficacious with many, as it was with the robber on the cross. Death itself may be their purgatory. In multitudes of human beings, where we see only ignorance, sin, or defiance, there may be in the crisis of death, or in the valley of the shadow, the faint workings of a change in the principle of their life, and what may thus begin shall grow. If there be the decisive point of life, however late it may come, the tremulous inclination of the soul to God, the feeblest presence of that which makes for righteousness and faith, in heathen or in Christian, it will be recognised by the Judge; and under the conditions of the new life it will grow to more in the power and the blessedness of good."

I do not know whether you are acquainted with the results of recent psychical research, and with the inferences which may, in the present state of that science, in fairness be drawn from them. It is not here the place nor the occasion to discuss this aspect of the matter, or to examine the value of scientific theories, respecting which a great deal has been said and written in recent times, and which, in a sense, are still *sub judice*. But the conclusions to which the experiments of both experts and amateurs are pointing are of so remarkable and instructive a character, that they certainly deserve a passing reference in an examination of so deeply interesting a subject as the one now before us. Indeed, I am inclined to think that if the observations so far made should be confirmed by further experiments, science will become the handmaid of religion in a far truer and far more literal sense than the most enthusiastic theologian at present supposes or imagines.

To my own mind, it seems already certain that there is gradually disclosing itself to our bewildered sight a very world of energies, and powers, and intelligence which is incessantly and intimately encompassing us and acting upon us, and that the hitherto discovered characteristics of that world are infinitely more in keeping with what the orthodox doctrine postulates respecting the unseen state, than what so-called liberal theology asserts. I cannot say

more than this at present. I certainly do not care to say it in this connection; but I will gladly give you any further information on the subject you may desire if you are really interested. I could also lend you some useful books, or, better still, we might talk it over when next we meet. But would it not be strange and a marvellous manifestation of the gradual working out of the Divine purpose if, after an age of liberal theology and of anti-Christian science, an entirely new departure of scientific research were found to witness in favour of revelation and of the historic truth of Christ. My own impression is, that all the present indications are pointing that way, and that a time is not far distant when a hundred facts and circumstances will combine to once more vindicate the truth and beauty and consistency of the Church's teaching.

How far our own moral experiences go to confirm what science would seem to teach on the subject, I will not now stop to inquire. That would open up a very difficult and complicated question, and would manifestly lead us too far. I know, moreover, what a rooted distrust you have of the subjective side of things, and how worthless you conceive any evidence to be which comes from that quarter. Let me therefore only say, in the words of Mr Gladstone, finding response, I fancy, and assent in the hearts of all Christian thinkers:—

"I presume that most Christians, who watch with

any care their own mental and inward experience, are but too well convinced that they have to do with 'principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world'; that they are beset by a great personal scheme of evil agency, under which method and vigilance, employing whatever bad means, or even good, will serve their purpose, are raised in their work of seduction and ruin to what seems a terrible perfection."

Respecting the present tendencies of liberal theology, and the supposed blessings which it is to bring to emancipated and enlightened mankind, this same great thinker, writing in the evening of his life, says:—

"Menace as well as promise, menace for those whom promise could not melt or move, formed an essential part of the provision for working out the redemption of the world.

"So far as my knowledge and experience go, we are in danger of losing this subject out of sight and out of mind. I am not now speaking of everlasting punishments in particular, but of all and any punishment; and can it be right, can it be warrantable that the Pulpit and the Press should advisedly fall short of the standard established by the Holy Scriptures, and not less uniformly by the earliest and most artless period of hortatory Christian teaching? Is it not altogether undeniable that these authorities

did so handle the subject of this penal element, in the frequency of mention and in the manner of handling, that in their Christian system it had a place as truly operative, as clear, palpable, and impressive, as the more attractive doctrines of redeeming love? I sometimes fear that we have lived into a period of intimidation in this great matter. That broad and simple promulgation of the new scheme which is known as the Sermon on the Mount was closed with the awful presentation of the house built upon the sand."

With these wise words, based on an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, and, of course, on the many-sided experiences of a life affording unique opportunities of insight into human character, I most thoroughly agree.

It cannot be accidental, surely, that Holy Scripture contains far more warnings of hell than promises of heaven. He who searches the hearts and reins knows what truth is best calculated to stay and direct the weak and frail mind of man. I feel confident that when the secret history of each saved soul comes hereafter to be revealed, it will be found that the fear of hell has saved more souls from hell than the promises of heaven. Although fear is not the highest motive to virtue, it is the most common one nevertheless, and, in the critical moment of life, the most powerful one beyond doubt.

30th January.

Yes! You are quite right in concluding that "I regard Catholicism as the one sovereign remedy for the world's moral and spiritual ills." It is my deep inward conviction that the true happiness of mankind, in both the natural and the supernatural order, is far more intimately bound up with the one true Church of Christ than most people suppose. For myself, it is certain beyond all doubt that the dark shadow which is haunting human life, and which is everywhere and increasingly creating that wretched pessimism which is so destructive of all true and enduring joy, is being cast by the loss of the true historic faith, and by the consequent undoing of the supernatural life of the soul.

And I am not saying this because my personal devotion to the Catholic Church and my confidence in her power is transforming me into a religious enthusiast or a dreamer. I am speaking from careful and prolonged observation, and from the slowly formed convictions of a lifetime. You know that I have long and patiently thought over this, the most solemn and important of all solemn and important subjects,

and that I am not a man who arrives at his conclusions hastily, or who is in the habit of allowing personal feeling or sentiment to outstrip calm reason and judgment. Indeed, I might, from one point of view, not unfairly be called a pessimist of the deepest dye. But it is because of my pessimism in one particular direction that I am such a great optimist in another.

Let me, by way of concluding this series of letters, briefly summarise the processes of thought by which I arrive at my conclusion.

I am, in the first place, for the reasons which I have already fully indicated in my letter of the 16th December last, entirely convinced of the innate corruption of our human nature—of its inherent estrangement from God. The fall of man and his loss of God is, to my mind, the most certain and the most self-evident fact in human life of which we have any knowledge. I am certain that I would have arrived at it even if the orthodox doctrine had never been made known to me. I have very fully and carefully weighed the arguments which have at various times, but more especially in this present age, been urged against this view, and I have tried my best to see things with the eye of the modern scientist and philosopher: but they have failed to convince me. I am satisfied that, in the face of the constant and universal experience of mankind, the old historic view of the matter is the only really tenable and scientific

one, and that, in his heart of hearts, man is himself most thoroughly convinced of this fact. I look upon all the modern liberal and scientific departures from the orthodox doctrine as so many fruitless attempts to evade an unpleasant and, in these present times, certainly highly unwelcome and unattractive conclusion. I believe that conclusion, however, to be a necessary and inevitable one for all really deep and accurate thinkers. For me, at any rate, it is certain that man has fallen away from God and has lost Him, and that this loss has created a vacuum in his soul which nothing can fill except a whole-hearted recognition of the truth itself, and a deliberate and whole-hearted return to God by the method which He has Himself marked out.

It is not necessary for me to repeat here what I have explained very fully in my earlier letter. Read the history of a life like that of the late Mr Romanes, and you will see what I mean. If such a man, wrapt up as he was in his scientific pursuits, and accepting as he did the last conclusions of a materialistic philosophy, could not succeed in shaking off the moral shadow hovering over his soul, what is to be expected of the lesser lights? There is, believe me, restlessness, disquietude, and the *tædium vitæ* everywhere, and the circumstance that it is not immediately apparent in all men is merely owing to the fact that some men are so much more successful in concealing their real thoughts and feelings than others. The age-long sick-

ness of man naturally is attended by a variety of symptoms, and has many different forms and modes of expression, according to the peculiar tendencies of character and of temperament, but the underlying cause and disease is the same in all, and to the observant student of human nature it is but too self-evident. Indeed, I am firmly convinced that the best and the most successful of men, without faith and without a supernatural aim and support, are thoroughly miserable, however little they may be disposed to acknowledge their misery and the cause of it to themselves and to others. "Thou hast made us for Thyself," said S. Augustine, "and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." No greater truth, I am certain, was ever uttered by the tongue of man, and in no age of the world's history has it found more striking confirmation than in the present.

And to believe that in a world of law and of order such a want was allowed to exist and to find constant and universal expression, without there being in that moral sphere in which it must have originated, any set of facts or truths with which it is in correspondence, and by which it can be explained and satisfied, appears to me to be an entirely unscientific conclusion, equivalent to acceptance of the materialistic philosophy of life in its most pronounced and extreme form. It is an intellectual position which I cannot hold, however much it may commend itself to some of the learned men

of our age. For myself, the voice of nature, speaking in the universal experience of mankind, is more scientific, and, therefore, more conclusive than the voice of any dominating human philosophy.

Now historic and orthodox Christianity alone recognises and explains this disordered state of our nature. It is to it that it appeals; it is upon it that it builds up its entire system; it is for it that it provides the only genuine and effective Remedy. And here lies the solution of the whole matter. The moral suffering of mankind can only find relief in a correct diagnosis of the disease which is causing it, in an unreserved acknowledgment of the existence of that disease, and in an equally unreserved acceptance and application of the one Remedy provided by Almighty God and revealed by Jesus Christ. I am convinced that all the attempts of so-called "liberal" theology, all the devices and strategies by which the modern naturalistic philosophy seeks to escape from this position, are dictated by human pride and egotism, and that they will be attended by the most dismal failure. It is "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus which can alone make man free from the law of sin and of death."

But, granting for a moment that there are men who are thoroughly persuaded that this orthodox view of the matter is untenable, and who have shaken off, or imagine they have shaken off, that hateful spell which the consciousness of sin is so

apt to cast over the soul: admitting that there are persons who are quite happy without the full and clear recognition of these great truths, would this render my argument invalid? I think not. My reply would be that, knowing what we do of human life, such a state of mind must necessarily be an unnatural and artificial one, an impossible one with all accurate thinkers, and one which cannot in any case continue for any great length of time.

However happy some men may appear to be, by virtue of the conditions of their life or their achievements, that happiness can at best be but a passing and transitory one. The ultimate victory, in the most favoured of lives, must lie with the skeleton-in-the-cupboard—the skeleton in the shape of sickness, old age, the approaching loss of the good things of this life, and finally of the thought of death and of what may come after it. One way or another the "still small voice" is bound to make itself heard in the end. And this shadow no human power can disperse from the life of man. It is apt to vanquish the stoutest heart, and to defy the most cherished of philosophic theories—it is bound to awaken in the strongest soul the most disquieting thoughts and reflections.

And here, too, Christianity—I mean, of course, the historic Christianity of Christ — alone bridges the gulf, and imparts the only genuine and enduring comfort and relief. It remains, I am confident, the

best and most rational and satisfying solution of the distracting problem of life; it solves for us the dreadful mystery of death; it sustains the soul with its promises of a glorious future. I care little what some of the lesser lights of science have said respecting the reasonableness of this solution of life's mysteries and woes. It is sufficient for me to know that it is the one which, in every age, has most fully satisfied the best and noblest and most saintly of the world's thinkers.

Or if you should here be disposed to introduce the vexed question of the other great World-Religions which may be said to start with similar premises, but which solve the great mysteries of life in a different way, I would decline to follow you. It is an aspect of the subject which is very apt to be forced into view in order to complicate the argument in favour of Revealed Religion, or to divert attention from the main issues; it is, however, one on which the best thinkers of the age have, I fancy, made up their minds. I would sum up what I have to say on that point in the emphatic words of Mr W. S. Lilly: "None of my readers, probably, would seriously maintain that any other of the world's creeds can really dispute with Christianity the world's future. Too wild is the imagination to be gravely entertained that the progressive races of mankind and the leaders of the rest should prefer the word of Mohammed, of Zoroaster, of Gautama, to

the words of Jesus Christ; should turn away from the Bible to the Qu'rân, the Avesta, or the Pitakas. The issue before us is between Christianity and no religion."

Yes! the issue is between Christianity and no religion. And I go further than this: I maintain that for really spiritual men, for men who are in any kind of moral correspondence with its doctrines, the ultimate decision *must* be in favour of Christianity. Its wonderful adaptability, its correspondence with the deepest needs of our nature, its marvellous power over our nature in life as well as in death, its transforming influence over the entire character of man, are such conclusive evidences of its Divine origin, that they can be resisted only by those who are not of goodwill, or who are ignorant, or have misunderstood or misinterpreted its doctrines.

"As physicians," wrote an eminent medical man* not long ago, "we are brought so directly in contact with humanity in all its phases, and see so deeply into the hidden realms of its woes and its needs, that we come to know well where true healing is to be found. We are thus able to bear witness to the light in which it is best to live, and we believe, further, that the Christian faith is not only the best one to live by but the best one to die with."

I must confess that, for myself, a testimony like

* Introduction to the late Sir Andrew Clark's *The Physician's Testimony for Christ*, by Sir Dyce Duckworth, M.D., LL.D.

this is of far greater value, and has far greater evidential force in establishing the truth of Christianity, than many of the clever and exhaustive treatises which issue from the press from time to time. Christianity clearly is a living thing, a vital life-giving principle, the reality and value of which is best realised by those who have experienced it. And it is really here that the end of religious controversy is reached. But if you should be inclined to raise yet another philosophical difficulty, and to argue that our *need* of a certain religion and its wonderful adaptability to the peculiar wants of our nature is not necessarily evidence of its truth, I would still be able to answer your objections from the standpoint of ordinary good sense, and without entering the sphere of the theologian proper. I would say, in the words of one of our best and most accurate thinkers *:—

"Is it a rational universe if the moral life of mankind be founded on an illusion? Can the holiness of the world's saints, the virtues of its best heroes, the moral life of the mass of mankind, have had their source and origin, their never-failing food and support, in one huge hallucination?"

Or, to use the striking words of another modern writer, who is not a Catholic †:—

"If a mere falsehood could make its way out of a remote Galilean village; could reform the hideous

* The Rev. M. Maher: *Psychology*, p. 536.
† V. C. Desertis.

corruptions of Rome, corruptions so foul that historians dare not give in all their naked horror the pictures of society drawn by Ovid, Juvenal, and Martial; if it could command the allegiance of the hardy warriors of the north, whose swords had won for them the empire of the world; could become the belief of the bravest, truest, and most honourable among the nations; could foster their virtue as the highest in man; and, after inspiring the evangelist, nerving the martyr, guiding priest and warrior, king and saint, through the ages that are gone; if, after purifying the lives and comforting the deaths of millions, this belief could yet turn out a lie in the end, then indeed our best criteria of truth and falsehood are lost, and we can only turn in disdainful Pyrrhonism from a record which would revolt every instinct of the human heart."

Starting then, as I do, with the deep sense of the truth of Christianity, the problem before the thoughtful inquirer becomes a comparatively simple one, and it can be summarised in a few sentences. The issue before him clearly is between Protestantism and Catholicism. Now, to which of these two will you go?

Respecting the former there is, in the first place, the *Anglican Church.* At present you are in it, and need not therefore go to it. But in what sense are you in it? Clearly, by virtue of the accident of your birth, of the peculiar circumstances and environments

of your life—not, I venture to think, by virtue of deep personal convictions confirming and ratifying these. Would you be in it, or would you find your way to it, if you approached it as an outsider who, convinced of the truth of Christianity, is seeking for the true Church of the Redeemer? This, after all, is the way to put the question, and I wish all thoughtful Anglicans would put it to themselves in this form and from this point of view. My own personal conviction is that the majority of them would abandon the inquiry after having proceeded in it but a very short way. It is not, as some people seem to imagine, a question of subtle points in theology, but a question of great broad principles, and my own opinion is that it is history and common sense rather than theology which will finally settle the whole matter.

I have no quarrel with the Church of England. It is a great social and national institution which has its place and use in the development of a great people, and which counts amongst its adherents some very able and excellent persons. But how any intelligent being who knows something of the history of the past, who is acquainted with the teaching of the New Testament, and who has some experience of the real needs of human nature, can look upon the Anglican Church as in any sense part of the historic Church of Christ, of the spouse of the Redeemer, of the Divine Kingdom, set up in a world of changes and shadows, in order to teach the truth of God to

the nations, and to convert the nations to that truth, passes my comprehension. The thought could not possibly enter into any man's mind and take root there had not early education and the constant associations of life familiarised such a mind with it, and, of course, predisposed it towards it. And I am confident that a time will come—and indeed is not far distant—when intelligent men will wonder how this idea ever came to be entertained, how reasonable men could have been got to defend it, and how any person could ever have supposed that it would endure for any great length of time.

The most superficial examination of the history of the last four hundred years might surely be expected to convince the most prejudiced mind that the Church of England is an essentially *human* institution, having its origin in the weaknesses and perversions of our human nature, and exhibiting those weaknesses, in its entire framework and constitution, in the most striking and manifest way. It is, in its doctrinal aspect, a mass of confusion and contradictions, a jumble of disjointed and mutilated truths; and, in the very truest and literal meaning of the word, "the house divided against itself." And in what sense can such an institution be regarded as the home of the divine Spirit of God, constantly exhibiting and witnessing, in an ever-changing world, to the changeless truth of the Redeemer, and amidst the snares and pitfalls of

human sciences and philosophies, guiding and safeguarding the immortal spirit of man unto everlasting life. The very notion itself is absurd on the face of it, and I am quite confident that you will ultimately reject it, as thousands have done before you, and as you have perhaps already rejected it inwardly in the spirit of your mind.

I do not know whether it has ever occurred to you that it would take a serious seeker after truth half a lifetime to find out what the Church of England really teaches (if indeed it has any ascertainable teaching), that it would take all the learning of the schools to enable him to distinguish "opinions" and "views" and "tendencies of thought," from what may fairly be regarded as *doctrine*, and that he could not in the end hope to be very clear as to what it really does and does not regard as necessary to salvation.

There is, I am sure, no need for me to weary your mind with references to the popular controversies of the day, of which we have had more than enough in recent years, and of which all sincerely religious minds are so utterly weary. You know full well that there is not a single doctrine of the Faith of which the most diverse and mutually destructive expositions and interpretations are not possible and permissible in the Anglican Establishment, and that there is not a heresy or modern form of misbelief which it does not take under its protecting and all-sheltering wing.

The position has become so ridiculous and absurd, that it has been constrained to resort to that last bold but fatal device of all hopeless and lost causes: to make a virtue of what all right-minded men know to be a vice, and instead of mourning over its increasing heresy and the disintegration of its religious system, to pride itself upon them, and to call them by all kinds of agreeable and attractive names.

The really safe and honoured men in the Church of England are not now those who, as in the apostolic age, hold and proclaim the faith in sincerity, and who guard the integrity of the Divine deposit from the introduction of impure and foreign elements; but those who give the widest possible scope to human fancy and to human perversion, and who countenance teachings that mutually destroy each other. How literally true and striking is that famous passage in Newman's *Prospects of the Anglican Church*, in which he says:—

"A man who can set down half a dozen general propositions, which escape from destroying one another only by being diluted into truisms; who can hold the balance between opposites so skilfully as to do without fulcrum or beam; who never enunciates a truth without guarding himself from being supposed to exclude the contrary; who holds that Scripture is the only authority, yet that the Church is to be deferred to; that faith only justifies, yet that it does

not justify without works; that grace does not depend on the sacraments, yet is not given without them; that bishops are a Divine ordinance, yet those who have them not are in the same religious condition as those who have: this is your safe man, and the hope of the Church; this is what the Church is said to want, not party men, but sensible, temperate, sober, well-judging persons to guide it through the channel of no-meaning, between the Scylla and Charybdis of Aye and No."

Or if you want to know what a more recent student of the subject has to say about the matter, read that deeply instructive book by Mr Mallock, to which I have already referred, and which I cannot recommend to you too strongly: *Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption in the Church of England.* The picture which is there unrolled is a truly sad and disheartening one, but it is one literally true to fact, and the accuracy of the statements made has not, so far as I am aware, been disputed or controverted. The book exhibits the extraordinary contrasts in the various forms of accepted Anglican Doctrine in the most striking and effective manner, and conclusively shows how utterly hopeless and untenable the whole thing really is. To give one single instance in point: to the question, What is the Church? Mr Mallock quotes the reply of the present Bishop of Durham (Dr Gore), who says:— "One indubitable sign by which we may know

whether a body forms part of the Catholic Church or not, is its possession or non-possession of the apostolic succession amongst its ministers" (p. 23). And then that of the Bishop of Hereford, who declares "that the doctrine of a divinely ordered priestly authority is precisely the error that the Reformation really banished from the Church" (*Church and Faith*, p. 25).

I ask you, in all honesty, and with all earnestness, *can* confusion and heresy go further than this; can a clearer illustration of its destructive processes be conceived? Can an educated man be expected to accept and to submit himself to a system of religious thought on the fundamental principles of which its own authorised leaders are at hopeless variance, and on the essential aims and characteristics of which they are not of one mind? Can the guiding and instructing Spirit of God be supposed to dwell, and to operate through and by the means of such a system?

Or take the much debated subject of the modern Higher Criticism. You know, of course, the *chef d'œuvre* of the Anglican Church in that department: the notorious *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Both the religious and the secular press have recently passed judgment upon it, and the critics of these "higher" critics have said a variety of strange and instructive things. Some of them have made a bold effort to save something out of the universal biblical ship-

wreck. But the best of them seem to be conscious of the hopelessness of their task. One cannot read this last and crowning production of a decaying religious organisation without again and again rubbing one's eyes and asking oneself whether the whole thing will not turn out to be some hideous dream, some terrible mental delusion. The entire supernatural structure of the Christian faith gone—gone beyond all hope of recovery, and of the life and teaching of the Incarnate Son of God nothing left but the record of the few external events, from the admitted correctness of which it may certainly still be gathered that a man, to whom a later age erroneously attributed Divine characteristics, in all probability existed, and perished by crucifixion, once upon a time! Whether it will be possible for any rightly instructed Anglican, claiming acquaintance with the most advanced critical learning, to assert more than this hereafter, may be very seriously doubted; and the question which not unfairly presents itself to the mind is, whether, from such a destructive process as this, even that remaining fragment will be saved in the end.

What one marvels at, in the contemplation of this extraordinary state of things, of course, is not the production of such a work itself. That might have been expected, and has probably been foreseen by those who know something of the necessary tendencies of the human mind and of such processes of

thought. Ours is the age of reason and of science, and of a universal impatience of the supernatural; and, once that supernatural called in question and then submitted to the fallible judgments of human reason, the result might have been gauged with a fair degree of accuracy. The startling thing is that such a work should be published under the protection and editorship of a learned dignitary of the Establishment itself, of an officially recognised teacher of theology at a great university, and that it should bear the impress of whatever that Church may be said to possess in the way of authority.

I am wondering whether the men who publish, and then recommend and advertise such a book as this, really suppose that intelligent persons who study their speculations, and who accept them as ascertained truth, will remain Christians, in any definite and intelligible meaning of the term, and that they will continue to subscribe to articles of faith and to ceremonies which are so plainly shown to be constructed upon a delusion, and the very foundations of which have thus effectually and authoritatively been removed. And can any person, still in possession of the power of clear judgment, and still believing in the supernatural element in Christianity, continue to regard an institution, setting forth and sanctioning such a thing as in any intelligible sense part of the traditional and historic Church of the Divine Redeemer? The very notion itself seems to

me to be an outrage on human reason, and the circumstance that such persons still exist can only be accounted for by the assumption that they are either wholly ignorant of what is really going on at the headquarters of their Church, or that they are deliberately shutting their eyes to what they instinctively feel to be a very unpleasant and disquieting, and certainly a very complicated, subject.

But how wonderfully and strikingly is the divinely-inspired method of the true Church being established and justified by these extraordinary events; how frail and human and fallible are the foundations of heresy shown to be! With what good reason might we not once more ask that striking question of Cardinal Manning's: "Take away the Roman Catholic Church, and where is Christianity?" In this age, too, echo answers, Where? And reply there is none.

I maintain, then, that if you value your soul, to the Anglican Church you cannot possibly go—certainly not if you look upon yourself, as I believe you to be at this present time, as an outsider and a seeker after truth, whom the grace of God has started on the path of inquiry. Not human prejudice, or theological bitterness, or personal religious enthusiasm, but a hundred incontrovertible facts and circumstances plainly proclaim that Church to be heretical in its every fibre and sinew, and, in spite of a thousand appearances to the contrary, to be steadily approaching its own dissolution.

Or will you go to one of the many Dissenting Communions? Will you seek amongst them for that One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church which you believe to have been founded by Christ, and which you admit to have been instituted, in order that it might preserve and proclaim His truth unchanged until the end of time? I do not suppose that you would entertain such a thought with any seriousness, or that you would want me to discuss the subject with you at any great length. For myself, there has never been any need to look at the theological aspect of the matter; a single glance at history has been more than sufficient for me, and it should settle the matter finally and effectually with a man of our way of thinking.

In my opinion, the hundred and more Dissenting Communions now flourishing in this country condemn themselves. Their very existence is destructive of their claim. The names by which they are distinguished testify to their human origin, to the mutilated and one-sided character of their system and their teaching. They are "the rebellious children to which a distracted and rebellious mother has given birth," and, whatever useful work they may be doing in the way of defending some particular fragment of truth, and however excellent the men who find it possible to identify themselves with them may be, the systems themselves have no Divine and supernatural, and therefore no permanent, foundation, and, like the

Church of England, they are bound to pass away. Here, too, the process will most probably not be accomplished by sudden dissolution, but by that gradual disintegration and division which is the ultimate destiny of all forms of heresy, and which, as you know, is already so manifestly and universally at work amongst them.

I can, of course, entirely understand a man being and continuing an excellent and convinced Wesleyan or Baptist or Congregationalist, if early education and the influence or example of parents have thus determined for him his particular religious position, and if a doubt or a difficulty has never come to him. We know that some persons *never* come to recognise the duty of independent inquiry into the truth of their religious belief. But how any man whom a study of history, of the present chaotic state of the non-Catholic world, and of modern Biblical Science, has in any measure brought to our way of thinking, can accept any one of these systems of religious thought as the best and fullest expression of Revealed Truth, I entirely fail to understand; and I cannot believe that there are very many such persons in these modern days.

Still, I fully believe that, in all probability, Dissent will, for yet many years to come, continue to form a prominent element in the religious life of this country, seeing that it is an expression of one of the peculiar tendencies of the English character, and that it is a

position which is thoroughly justified by an uncompromising and whole-hearted acceptance and application of the Protestant principle.

But it is surely an instructive and highly suggestive circumstance, that it is in England and in the English-speaking countries alone, where these independent and self-constituted religious communions have had their rise, and where they have grown and flourished, and that it is in no other countries and amongst no other peoples that they have taken root, or become in any sense a religious or moral power to be reckoned with.

Now, there is one very painful fact which must impress itself upon the thoughtful student of these great religious problems of the day, however anxious he may be to judge fairly, to allow for all the untold material good which even the most human systems of Religion are accomplishing in the world, and to take a generous and liberal and all-round view of things. It is the circumstance that the religious divisions, and, indeed, the very existence of the Sects, the setting up of parties and schools of thought in the Church of England, the known disagreements amongst the students and exponents of the Sacred Scriptures, whatever may and can be said in their favour, have unquestionably had the effect of undoing the very foundations of the Christian Religion. They have created the spirit of unrest and distrust in the

masses, and of utter disbelief and religious indifference in thoughtful minds.

This was, of course, inevitable, and is but a fulfilment of the repeated predictions of our Lord and of His Apostles. While the Churches have been disputing, the world has departed from the Faith, and that most terrible and destructive of all human heresies, religious indifference, has spread over the land. It has poisoned all the well-springs of human life and energy, and has once more reduced thousands of souls to that condition of moral misery, and of pessimistic despair, in which Christianity found the ancient Roman world.

It is thus that both the Church of England and the Sects have, beyond doubt, been made to serve the cause of the enemy of Christ, and that for them that glorious prayer of Christ for His Church has most certainly failed of its fulfilment. Well and justly might the disillusioned adherents of these religious bodies exclaim: "They are no longer one as Thou, O Christ, didst declare to be in the Father and the Father in Thee, and we poor distracted and storm-tossed souls have no longer any good reason for believing that it was indeed the Father that sent Thee."

And yet I am bound to admit that the processes of thought by which this attitude of mind is reached are normal and logical and necessary ones, and they

will most certainly become still more general as the absurdity of the entire position becomes better understood, and there is a greater determination to look the facts of the matter in the face. For those who take the wider view of things, who cannot conscientiously attach themselves to any one of the many parties in the Church of England or to any one of the Nonconformist Sects, who feel instinctively that the true Church of Christ must be something vastly different from all these, religious indifference becomes the only possible alternative.

The first step in that downward course is liberalism and theological "comprehensiveness"—the surrender of all definite dogma. But, by reason of the peculiar constitution of our nature, this soon degenerates into neglect of all religious exercises and devotions, and terminates in the ultimate collapse and shipwreck of Faith.

Slowly but steadily, the lowering cloud descends upon the heart and the mind, obscuring the Divine vision and extinguishing the light of the soul, until it finally envelops and engulfs it altogether, and all becomes quiet and still in the temple of God—until by the folly of man, man once more returns to that state of spiritual darkness and ignorance from which Christ came to save him and to set him free.

Will you, too, travel in that direction — towards that valley of the shadow of death and despair? Thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-men,

the hapless victims of human weakness and of human perverseness and pride, are bound thitherwards, and thousands more are daily joining the great throng. They are crying out in agony of mind and of spirit: "Who will show us any good? What must we do to be saved?"

There is but one intelligent and rational answer to that question, and I will give it to you as I would give it to those multitudes of distressed and perplexed souls in whom the light of life has been darkened, and from whose hearts the true joy of life has departed.

If you have a lingering belief in your heart that, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, Christ is divine, and that He holds the true key to the mystery of human life; if you still believe that it is He alone Who can control the wayward hearts and wills of men, and kindle in the human soul that true life of God which can alone enable it to rise superior to, and to triumph over all the pains and ills of life and the slow agonies of death; if you still believe that His doctrines are authoritative, and that it is upon them that the highest and noblest life has been built up in the past and can alone be built up in the future; that it is in and through them that mankind has in every age found joy and happiness and hope, and the great unchanging peace of God; if you want to find that peace for your own weary and tired soul: then away at once from the

vain fancies and imaginations of men; away from Sects and Parties, and human and fallible and perverse presentations of Truth; and back to the One Great Divine Teacher, instituted by God Himself; back to the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ—back to Rome!

Great Holy Catholic Church! Thou wast great and exalted when those who now accuse thee were as yet unborn, and thou wilt be great and exalted when they shall long have passed away and turned into dust, when their very names shall have been forgotten!

Thou wast great when tigers and leopard prowled in the Colosseum, and when a thousand martyrs, nourished at thy bosom and instructed by thee in the love of Christ and in the science of the Saints, joyfully shed their blood for thee and for Him!

Thou wast great when the armies of the barbarian overflooded Europe, and thou tookest them under thy sheltering wing, didst train and educate them, and didst teach them how to be truly great and good and happy!

And thou wilt be great and exalted when the swords which are now drawn against thee shall long have rusted in their scabbards, and when the sceptres opposing thy gentle sway shall have been broken—when the tongue of the scorner shall have been silenced!

Great Holy Catholic Church! Thou teachest the innocent child to fold its hand in loving and trustful prayer, thou awakenest hope in the breast of the sin-stricken, thou wipest the sweat from the brow of the toiler, and sheddest the rays of thy light into the lonely cell of the student,—thou layest thy hand in benediction upon our dying hearts, and plantest the symbol of redemption upon our graves!

And when our bodies have long turned into dust, and our very names have passed from the memories of the living, thou alone rememberest us and prayest for us!

Great Holy Catholic Church! To whom shall we go? Thou alone hast the words of Eternal Life!

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